PLANTING IDEAS • BEAUTIFUL GARDENS • EXPERT ADVICE

GARDENS ILLUSTRATED

56 STAR PLANTS

Brilliant colour for later days

Inside an eclectic city garden

with Californian style

Discover the most *BEAUTIFUL ANEMONES*

Get out more

boots, bags and blankets for autumn garden visits

Gentle interventions to enhance nature

from designer Andy Sturgeon

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Editor's letter

In this issue of *Gardens Illustrated*, award-winning designer Andy Sturgeon considers the gentle interventions that gardeners can make to restore order. Andy found himself a 'constant gardener' in his own garden during lockdown, attentive to every leaf, an approach somewhat at odds to his usual style. Here, instead, he shares practical and sustainable ideas for keeping nature in balance, from creatively training trees to the rhythm of repeating plants.

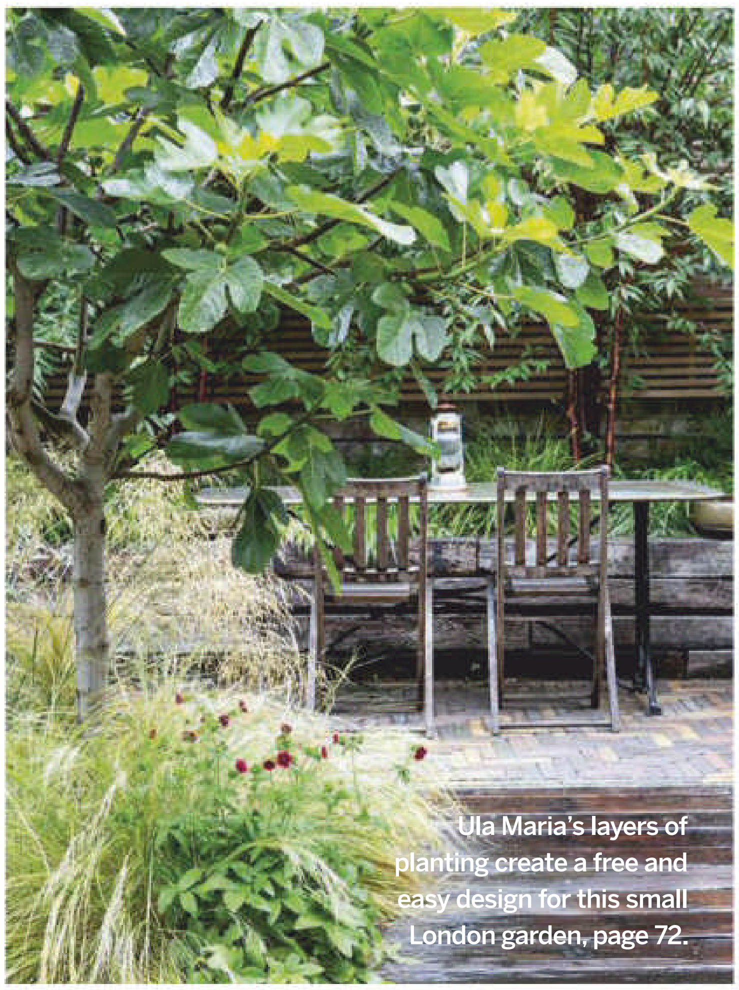
A sensitively planted and show garden at the RHS Flower Show Tatton Park in 2017 made garden designer Ula Maria one to watch. Thrillingly, three years on, the first of her work is coming to fruition. Her design for a small, city garden in east London, is a free and easy space. It has layered planting and differing textures using brick, gravel and wood. It is playful and elegant in equal measure, eschewing the maxim that less is more, particularly in a small space.

As we all start to venture further afield for our inspiration, in this issue we also share the best kit for autumnal garden visits with brilliant bags, flasks, blankets and boots.

I hope you enjoy the issue,

Lucy Bellamy

LUCY BELLAMY, EDITOR



RACHEL WARNE

Ula Maria's layers of planting create a free and easy design for this small London garden, page 72.

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CLAIRE TAKACS

A covered deck with a view in Emma Burrill's playful garden, page 38.

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Anemone hybrid by Jason Ingram, page 76

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EVENTS AND OFFERS

- Save money when you subscribe to the digital edition of *Gardens Illustrated* – page 24
- Save 20% on plants, bulbs and seeds at Sarah Raven† – page 107

† Reader offer available to UK readers only

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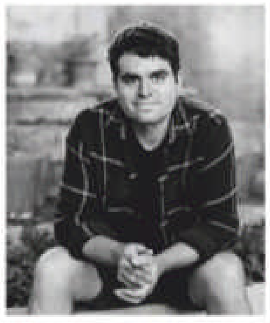
Natasha Goodfellow
Natasha visits an Ula Maria-designed garden, page 72. *"I love Ula's use of materials in this garden – she's made a small space feel really characterful and inviting."*


EVA NEMETH

Matt Collins
Matt is impressed by a lush London garden, page 30. *"This garden is totally in sync with the Modernist architecture of the house: airy palms, exotic evergreens and sunny perennials."*

Dianna Jazwinski
Dianna photographs this month's plant profile, page 52. *"This shoot enabled me to observe* Hebe *more closely and discover an understated beauty that deserves much more attention."*

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ANDREW MONTGOMERY

ANDREW MONTGOMERY

James Basson
James lives in the South of France where he runs Scape Design with his wife Helen, specialising in low-maintenance and dry gardens. He is a fervent advocate for creating sustainable landscapes. The winner of four Chelsea Gold medals, he was awarded Best in Show in 2017.

Fergus Garrett
Fergus was appointed head gardener at Great Dixter by Christopher Lloyd in 1993. He is passionate about passing on his knowledge through student programmes at Dixter and worldwide lectures. He was awarded an RHS Associate of Honour in 2008 and an RHS Victoria Medal of Honour in 2019.

Anna Pavord
Anna's books include her bestseller *The Tulip* and most recently *Landskipping*. For 30 years she was *The Independent*'s gardening correspondent. In 2000 the RHS awarded her the Veitch Memorial Medal. She lives and gardens in Dorset.

Dan Pearson
Dan is one of the UK's best-known garden designers, familiar to many through his gardening columns in the *Observer* magazine. Eight of his gardens, including the Tokachi Millennium Forest in Japan, have won awards and he was awarded Best in Show for his garden at Chelsea in 2015.

Sarah Price
Sarah is one of the UK's most sought-after garden designers who gained worldwide recognition for her designs for the 2012 London Olympic Park. She won Gold at Chelsea in 2012 and 2018, and was GMG Garden Columnist of the Year in 2016 for her design series in *Gardens Illustrated*.

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THE CHANCE TO GROW

Left Gyan with her cauliflowers **Above** Farmers compare their vegetables at a competition in Bungamati, Nepal

THE BRITISH RED CROSS HAS A PROUD HISTORY OF HELPING PEOPLE ACROSS THE WORLD TO REBUILD THEIR LIVES – AND YOU CAN HELP TOO

In the past few months, many of us have made a change or two to our lifestyle. Maybe you've been shopping more locally and sustainably, or even tried your hand at growing your own fruit and vegetables. Whatever your preference, you're unlikely to come across anything quite as extraordinary as the bumper cauliflowers grown by Gyan Maharjan in Nepal. At an impressive 3.5kg, her huge cauliflowers are around four times bigger than the average cauliflower from a UK supermarket.

Gyan was one of more than a million people whose homes were destroyed in Nepal's devastating 2015 earthquake. Like thousands of other small farmers, Gyan lost her livelihood as well, making getting back to normal after the earthquake even harder. After the disaster, the British Red Cross supported more than 8,000 people with cash grants of around £140, which were used to buy seeds, tools and other things they needed to start farming again.

"Before I received the grant, I didn't have enough food to feed my children," says Gyan. "I used the money I was given to buy seeds and fertiliser, which is expensive but important as it helps to protect the vegetables from insects." The British Red Cross also trained Gyan and more than 6,000 others in gardening skills to help them grow better crops. "I have grown cauliflower, coriander, garlic and different types of spinach," says Gyan. "I'm surprised at how big my cauliflowers have become!"

LEAVE YOUR OWN LEGACY

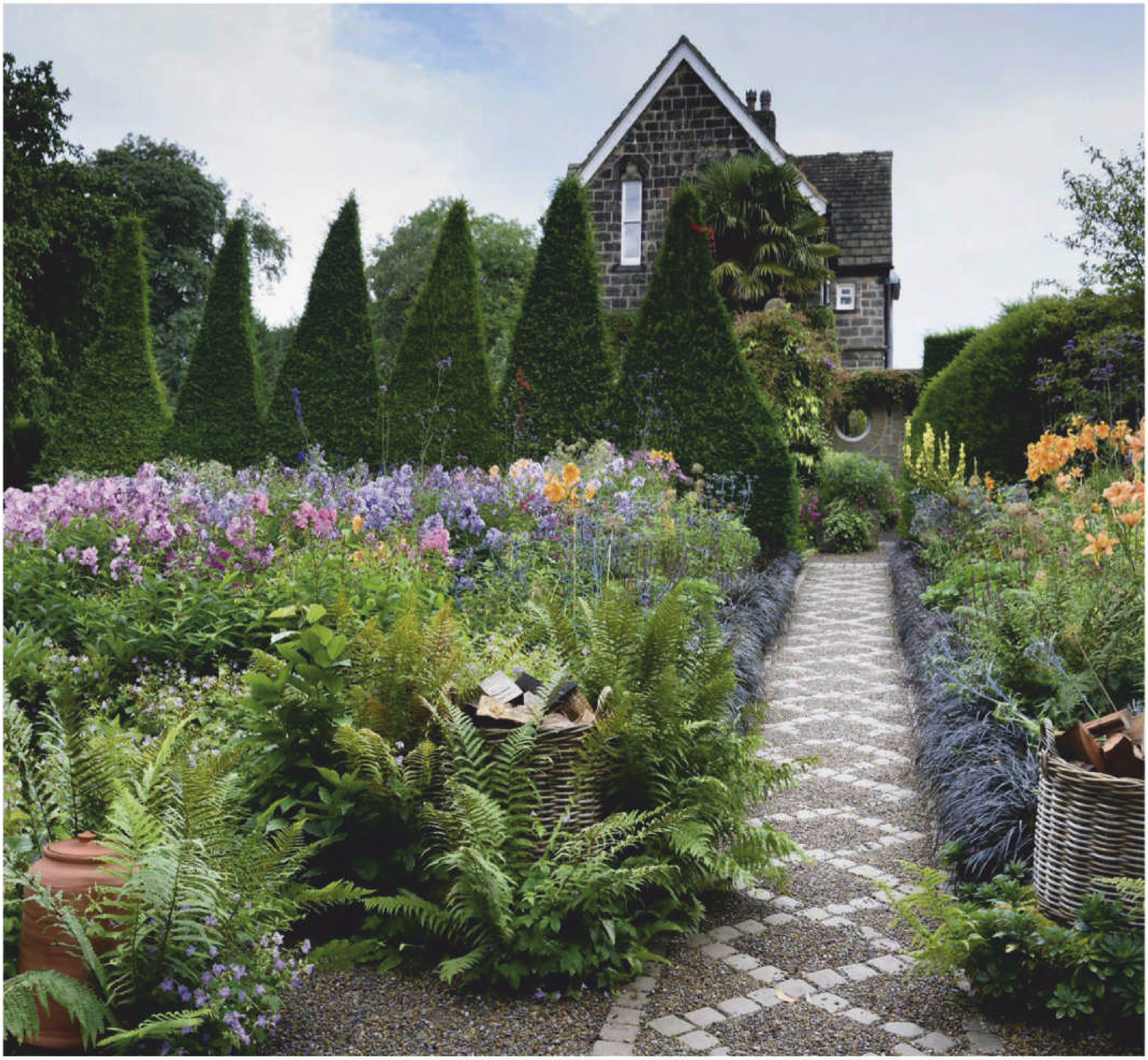
Only through the generosity of its supporters can the British Red Cross always be on hand to help those in crisis – whether they're on the other side of the world or on your own street. By leaving a gift in your will, you can leave a lasting legacy and ensure this vital charity can continue to support vulnerable people for many years to come.

BritishRedCross

For more information about supporting the British Red Cross with a gift in your will and the Free Will scheme, visit redcross.org.uk/freewill or call 0300 500 0401

Dig in

What's happening, what's in flower and what to buy this month



CAROLE DRAKE / GAP PHOTOS. OWNERS / PERENNIAL

Treasured spaces

Historic England has added 20 post-war landscapes to the National Heritage List for England. Ranging from the grounds of housing estates to Oxford colleges and industrial sites, the new listed spaces include York Gate Garden in Leeds (above), created by Sybil and Frederick Spencer and their son Robin as a suburban Arts and Crafts-style garden, Beth Chatto's environmentally sustainable garden in Essex and John Brookes' garden Denmans. The new protections are the result of a three-year consultation between Historic England and The Gardens Trust, which received more than 100 nominations for potential sites. The Trust's president, Dominic Cole, said: "Twentieth-century heritage landscapes have often been overlooked and undervalued so we hope that these additions will throw a spotlight on the importance and quality of post-war designed landscapes." **historicengland.org.uk, thegardenstrust.org**

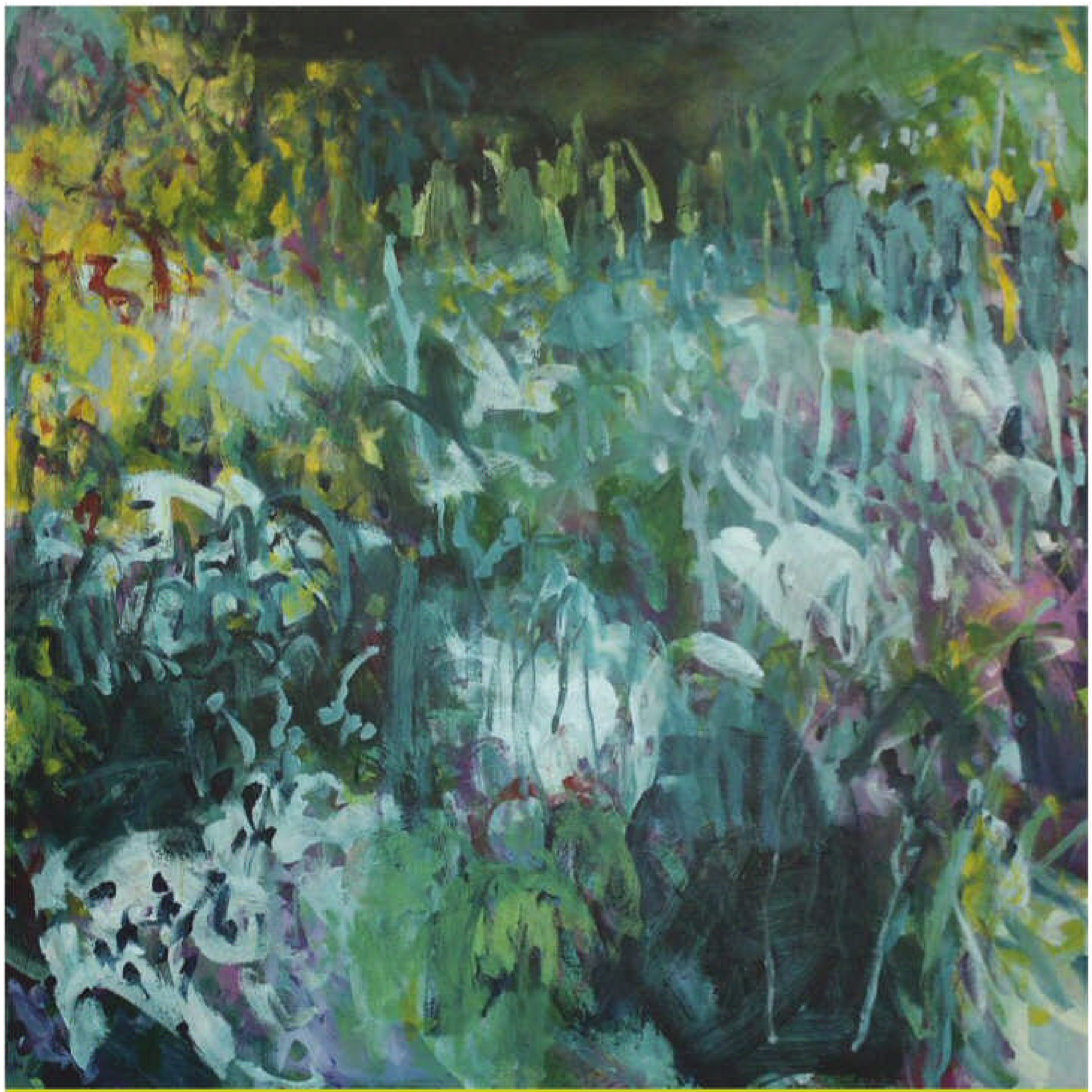
News

COMPILED BY **KATIE DUTTON**

SEEDBALL
HEDGEHOG MIX

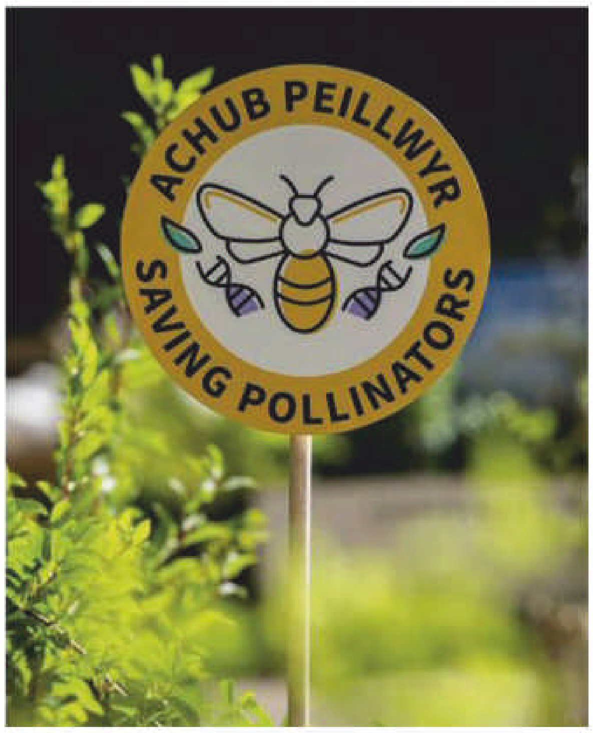
Sowing for a cause

The UK's hedgehog population has dropped a shocking 50 per cent since the turn of the century. Growing wildflowers is a simple and beneficial act to help boost their numbers and Seedball has created a mix with this purpose in mind. Its new Hedgehog Mix has been made in partnership with People's Trust for Endangered Species and includes a range of wildflower seeds, such as yellow rattle, wild carrot and poppy, which help to create shelter for hedgehogs, as well as attracting insects for them to snack on. Each tin includes 20 seed balls, each one containing more than 100 wildflower seeds that can be scattered in autumn for a spring bloom. Proceeds from the sale of every tin go directly to supporting PTES in its conservation work. The Hedgehog Mix costs £6. ***seedball.co.uk***



A Shropshire lass

Throughout autumn of last year, Shropshire-born artist Claire Scott spent several days sketching inside the walled garden of one of the county's loveliest nurseries, Wildegoose Nursery near Munslow, to capture its walled garden's colourful mix of perennials. You can see the vibrant paintings that emerged from Claire's visits in a new exhibition, *Visions from a Walled Garden*, at Ludlow's Twenty Twenty gallery – and available to view online – alongside some of Claire's more familiar landscapes of the Shropshire hills. 3-31 October, Wednesday to Saturday, 10.30am-4pm. 4 Quality Square, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1AR. Tel 01584 875363, **twenty-twenty.co.uk**



Seal of approval

Growers and nurseries throughout Wales have signed up to a new scheme that aims to prevent pollinator decline. Launched by the National Botanic Garden of Wales, the pollinator plant logo scheme will guarantee that shoppers are buying plants that are good for bees and other pollinators. Many of the plants that currently carry generic 'pollinator friendly' labels are still grown using toxic pesticides that are harmful to pollinators. The new label will guarantee the plant has been sown, grown and nurtured in a peat-free and synthetic-insecticide-free environment. Dr Natasha de Vere, head of science at the National Botanic Garden, said: "This is the only pollinator plant logo that assures buyers have made an environmentally sustainable choice." **botanicgarden.wales**

ALED LLEWELYN; CLAIRE SCOTT

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Young Propagators Society
July 2020

Prop culture

In July 2019, Sophie Cook, assistant nursery manager at Great Dixter, and Ellie Pay, propagator at Crûg Farm Plants, were both on the hunt for a good read on all things propagating-related. When they realised there was nothing like this on the market, the pair decided to collaborate on creating their own, and the Young Propagators Society (YPS) zine was born. Their charming, quarterly zine covers scientific and specialist prop knowledge, along with inquisitive features on the natural world. It is created in a classic zine format, with hand-drawn illustrations, cut-and-paste features and handwritten text alongside typed text – all then cut and glued together. One of the main aims of the YPS zine is to create a community of up-and-coming propagators who can support and learn from each other, and they encourage contributions from anyone with an interest in this topic. You can support the Young Propagators Society via its Go Fund Me page and receive your own copy of the zine by emailing **youngpropagatorssociety@gmail.com**

Growing up

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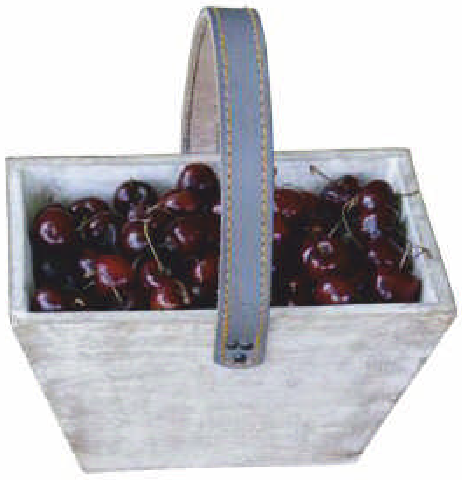

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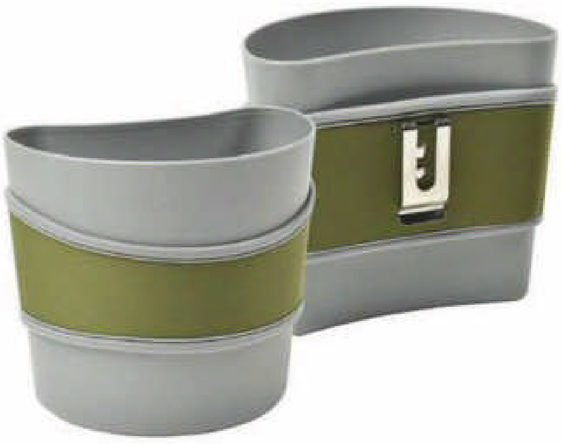

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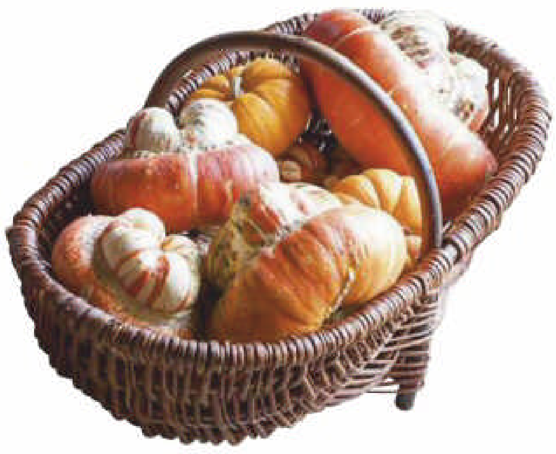

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Garden of Medicinal Plants – Chelsea Physic Garden Photo: R Alexander

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COMPILED BY KATIE DUTTON

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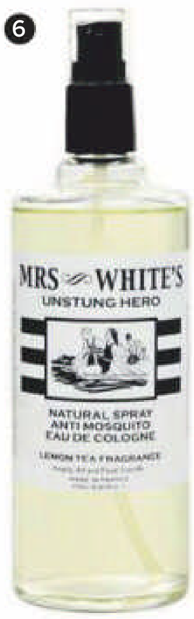

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NATURAL SPRAY
ANTI MOSQUITO
EAU DE COLOGNE
LEMON TEA FRAGRANCE

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5

1. Checked Blanket, grey, £110, 020 7729 6253, labourandwait.co.uk **2. Heather Women's Packaway Jacket,** yellow, £25, saltrock.com **3. Ciak Outdoor Folding Pouf,** 48x42x38cm, £183, 020 8421 1779, chaplins.co.uk **4. Leather Purse Belt,** black, £59, 0344 249 2079, cosstores.com **5. Kodak Mini Shot Digital Instant Camera,** yellow, £84, 0344 561 1234, currys.co.uk **6. Mrs White's Unstung Hero Mosquito Repellent,** £20, 0800 389 8195, victoriahealth.com **7. Tierra Tumblers,** set of six made from recycled plastic, £19.99, 020 7459 4027, rechic.co.uk **8. The Fir Set (notebook, mesh pocket, pen and pen holder),** €34, papiertigre.fr **9. Wacaco Nanovessel 3-in-1 Tumbler, Tea Infuser and Water Tank,** £25, 020 3735 9002, bearandbear.com

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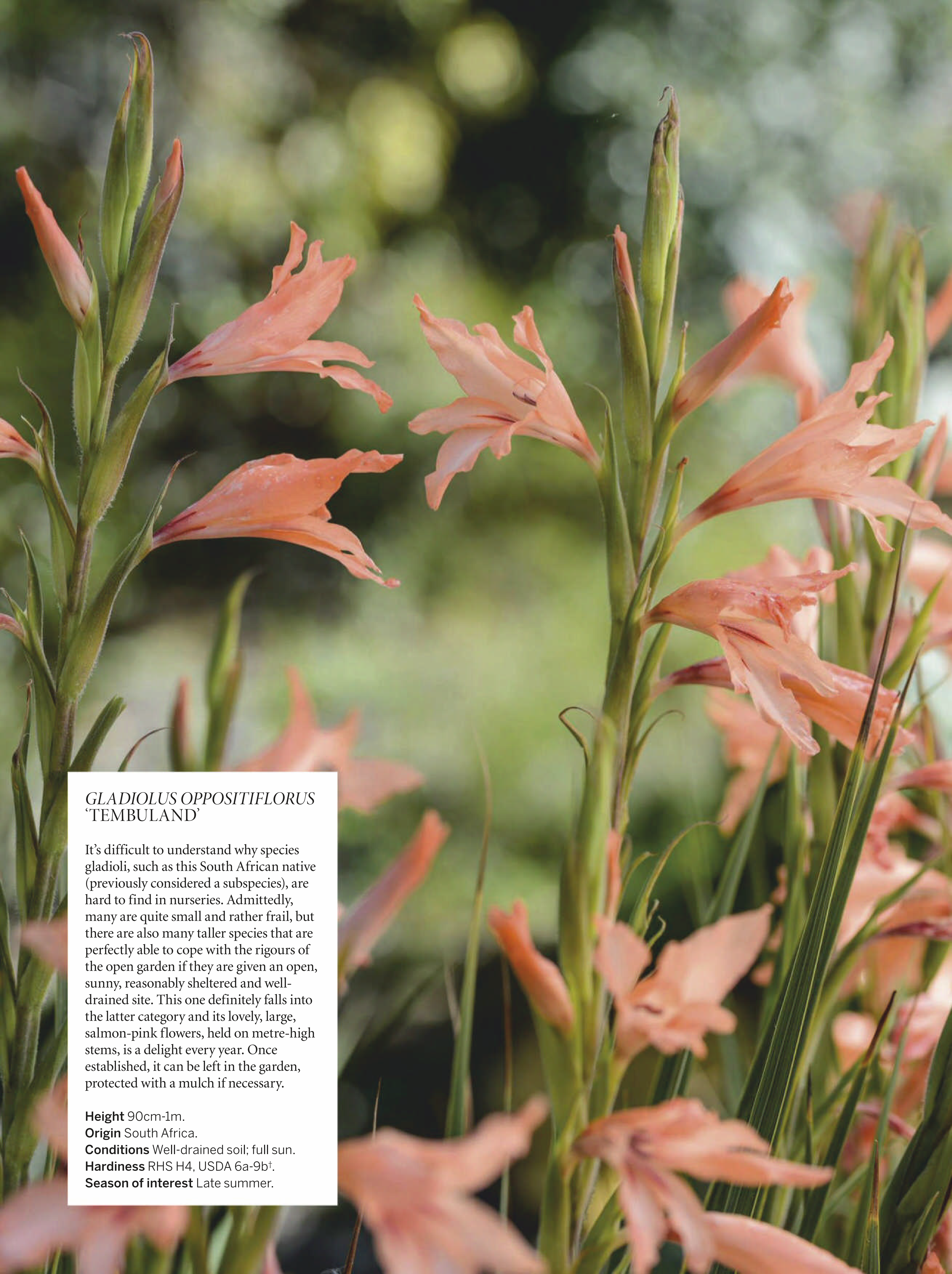
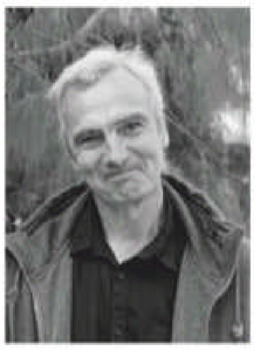


GLADIOLUS OPPOSITIFLORUS 'TEMBULAND'

It's difficult to understand why species gladioli, such as this South African native (previously considered a subspecies), are hard to find in nurseries. Admittedly, many are quite small and rather frail, but there are also many taller species that are perfectly able to cope with the rigours of the open garden if they are given an open, sunny, reasonably sheltered and well-drained site. This one definitely falls into the latter category and its lovely, large, salmon-pink flowers, held on metre-high stems, is a delight every year. Once established, it can be left in the garden, protected with a mulch if necessary.

Height 90cm-1m.
Origin South Africa.
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 6a-9b[†].
Season of interest Late summer.

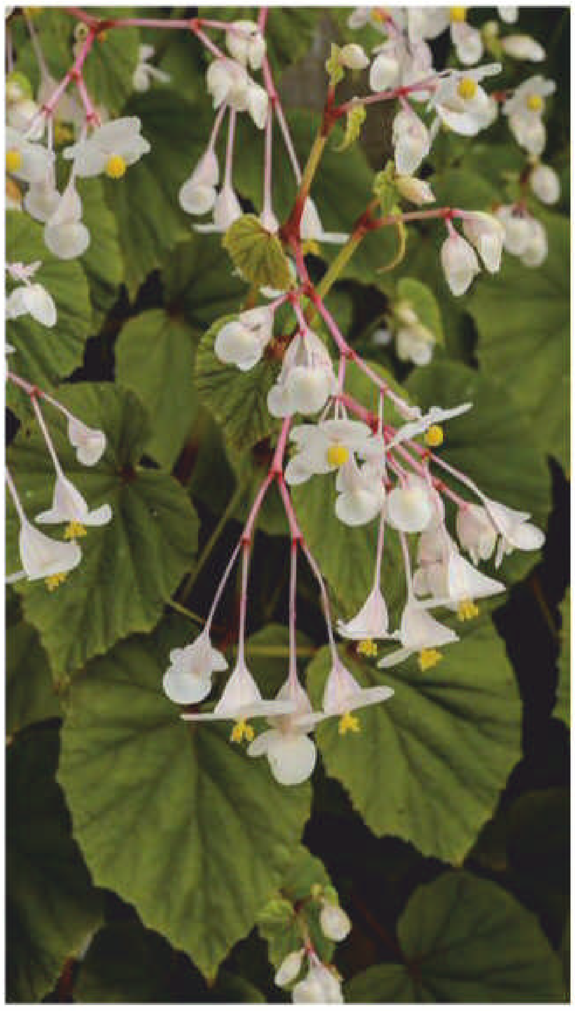

CHARLIE HOPKINSON

September plants

The days may be getting cooler but Keith finds himself drawn to some of the more tender and half-hardy perennials, along with a tall, pink, species gladiolus

WORDS KEITH WILEY PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM

Keith Wiley
runs Wildside
nursery in Devon
wileyatwildside.com



BEGONIA GRANDIS SUBSP. *EVANSIANA* VAR. *ALBA*

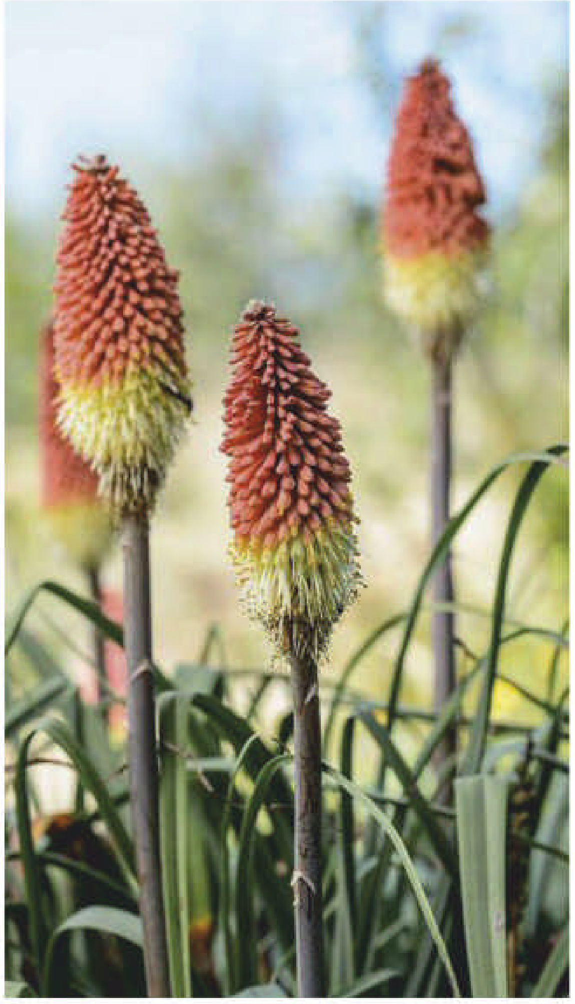
A begonia with an unmistakable family likeness to those grown as houseplants. It is fairly hardy, although I am always glad to see it re-emerging each year in the shady, cooler parts of the garden it prefers. I also keep a stock under the greenhouse bench, just in case of a savage winter, and in these conditions it goes quietly bananas, growing 60-70cm high (smaller in the garden) and producing long arching sprays on pink-flushed stems – a winning combination and lovely as a cut flower.

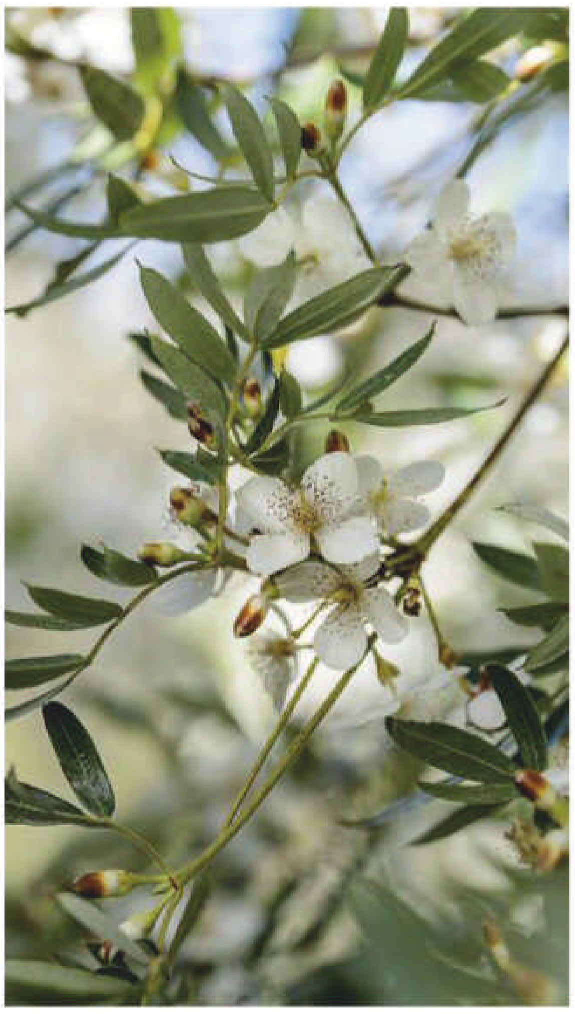
Height 50-60cm.
Origin Malaysia to China and Japan.
Conditions Sheltered site in well-drained loam or sand; shade to part shade.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 6a-9b.
Season of interest All summer for foliage, early autumn for flowers.

KNIPHOFIA CAULESCENS 'JOHN MAY'

A handsome foliage plant with steely grey-blue leaves. Its name has always confused me, as the *Kniphofia caulescens* that grows in the Drakensberg Mountains of South Africa is frailer, more elegant and rather more succulent than this cultivar. Whatever the veracity of its name, this plant is probably a more reliable good doer for general cultivation and excites much interest among our visitors for its foliage alone. The flowers, which appear in early autumn, are also handsome, borne on darker stems.

Height 90cm-1.2m.
Origin Garden (species South Africa).
Conditions Well-drained, moisture-retentive soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 7a-10b.
Season of interest Year round for foliage; early autumn for flowers.





EUCRYPHIA MOOREI

This is the last of the eucryphias to flower each year, but once established, it will reliably put on a performance worth waiting for. The relatively small, honey-scented flowers are borne in such profusion as to turn the plant white, while it hums to the sound of countless bees. It is supposed to be less hardy then other eucryphias but this has not been my experience, making an upright tree about six metres high that has remained undamaged over many winters. I would grow it for its handsome evergreen, pinnate foliage even if it never flowered.

Height 5-6m.
Origin Southeast Australia.
Conditions Well-drained, moisture-retentive soil; full sun to part shade.
Hardiness RHS H3, USDA 8a-10b.
Season of interest Year round for foliage; late summer for flowers.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. Hardiness ratings given where available.

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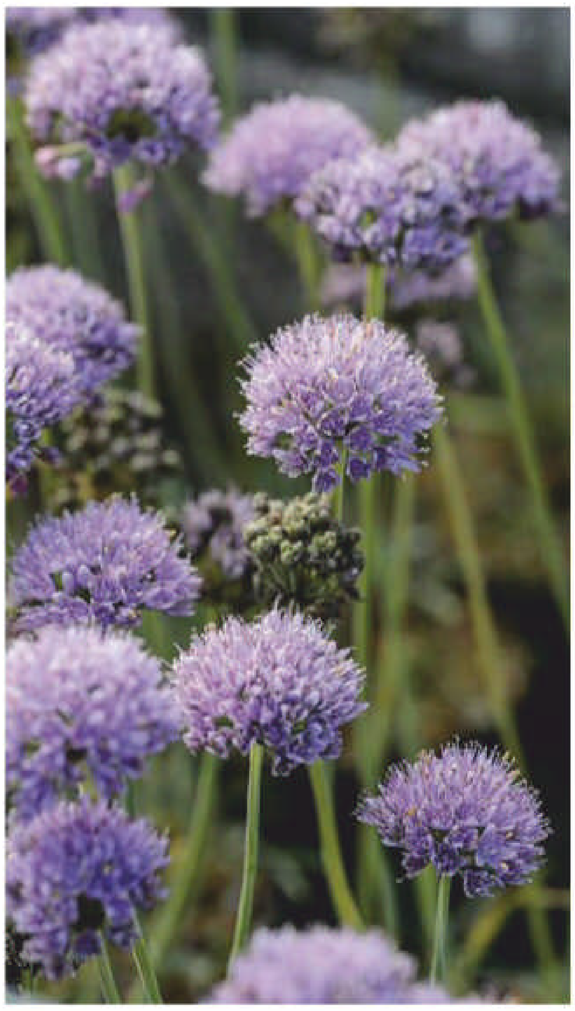


ALLIUM SENESCENS SUBSP. *GLAUCUM*

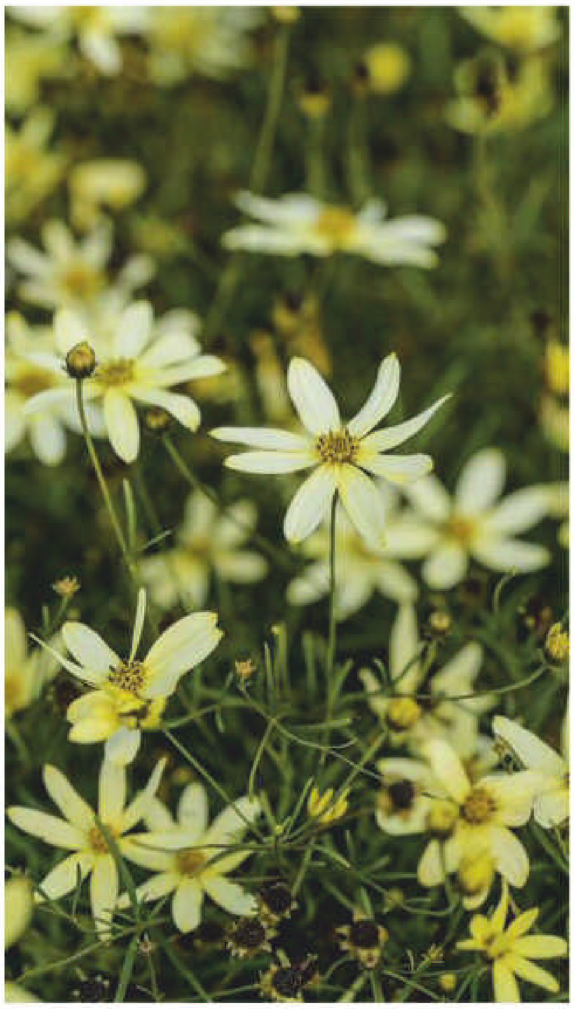
I must admit I've not experimented with alliums as much as I should. This is partly because many of those I like are bulbous and because I think of these, illogically perhaps, as plants that are difficult to grow successfully with minimal maintenance in a crowded border. This allium, however, is smaller and perennial, and one for growing in a rock garden or among lower-growing, widely spaced neighbours. Its grey-blue leaves are slightly curled, and its flowers are an absolute magnet for tortoiseshell butterflies – we once counted 14 on a plant 20cm across.

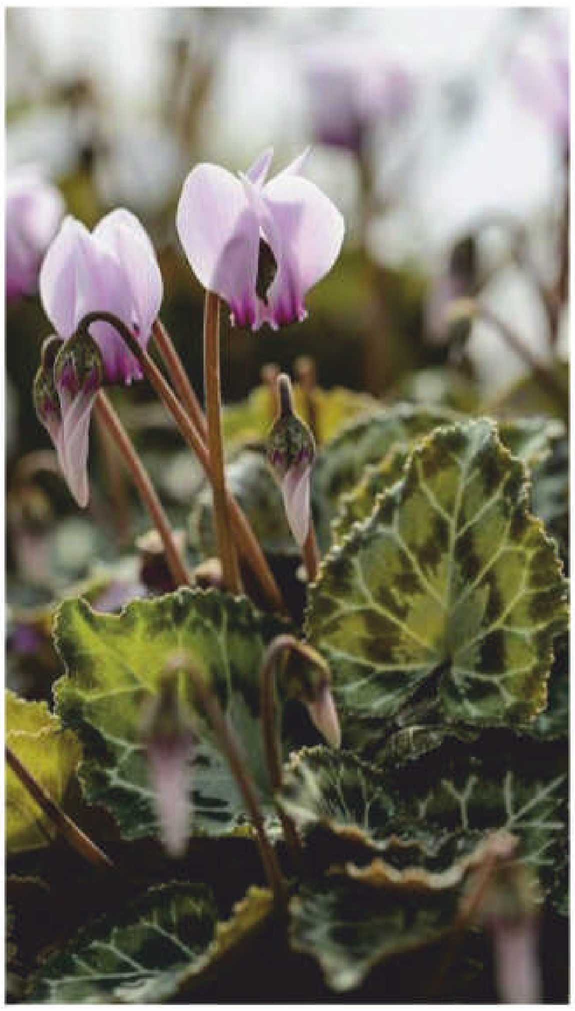
Height 20cm.
Origin Mongolia, Siberia.
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 4a-9b.
Season of interest Summer.

COREOPSIS VERTICILLATA 'MOONBEAM'

Coreopsis, sometimes called tickseeds, certainly tick all my boxes for what constitutes a good perennial plant. Easy, with thread-like foliage, making dense clumps that need no staking and squeeze out most weeds, then covering themselves with masses of yellow-orange flowers for many weeks. This is my favourite, with pale lemon-yellow flowers above more compact, yet still weed-resisting, clumps of dark-green leaves. Flowering in high summer and into the autumn, it is the perfect companion for low-growing grasses and smaller agapanthus cultivars.

Height 60cm.
Origin Southeastern USA.
Conditions Any soil; full sun to part shade.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 3a-9b.
Season of interest Late summer to autumn.





CYCLAMEN MARITIMUM

This species, which grows wild in Greece, used to be called *Cyclamen graecum* subsp. *anatolicum*. It needs a good summer baking to really thrive and flower. The flowers, which can be white or pink, are good without being very different to most of the hardy cyclamen. What sets this species apart are its leaves, which are felted and velvety and produce myriad patterns in shades of green and silvery pewter, all addictively beautiful. Best grown in a deep pot in the greenhouse where it can be given that all important summer heat.

Height 15-20cm.
Origin East Mediterranean, south Turkey.
Conditions Best in an unheated greenhouse in free-draining compost kept dry during summer dormancy.
Hardiness RHS H3, USDA 9a-11.
Season of interest Autumn to spring for foliage; September for flowers.

Places to visit

Recommended places to see seasonal plants at their best*

* Be sure to check opening times and advice on possible travel restrictions in advance

September is normally one of my favourite months on so many levels. The weather is often still pleasantly warm but with softer, gentler light than in high summer. The golden light of the setting sun seems to be more noticeable at this time of year, and I have always felt that grasses backlit by such a lowering sun are capable of creating some magical effects. These still warm days coupled with the end of the school holidays and so with slightly quieter roads, make this perhaps the best time to visit gardens, especially those that feature grasses to see the various ways they can be used.

The past 20 years have seen an increasing appreciation of grasses, in no small part thanks to the influence of the Dutch designer Piet Oudolf. His plantings are typically at their best in late summer and early autumn, and there are now several examples of his work in the UK, including the double Glasshouse Borders at RHS Garden Wisley, the Millennium Garden at Pensthorpe Natural Park in Norfolk, the Hauser & Wirth garden in Somerset, and the gardens at Scampston Hall in Yorkshire. All are worth a visit but a particular favourite is **Trentham Gardens** near Stoke-on-Trent where Tom Stuart-Smith has also designed the Italian Garden. Both designers are experts at using grasses to soften and enhance other flowering plants. Visits must be pre-booked. The Trentham Estate, Stone Road, Trentham,

▷

ASTER X FRIKARTII 'MÖNCH'

Michaelmas daisies have always been popular and over a very long history, breeders have produced many hundreds of different and exciting cultivars. There can be few, however, that have stood the test of time better than this one, bred by a Swiss nurseryman more than 100 years ago. With large flowers of a good lilac blue and central boss of yellow stamens it is one of the first to flower in the late summer and remains in flower for many weeks – much longer than most other types. A wonderful mixing colour and still one of the very best. AGM*.

Height 90cm-1.2m.
Origin Garden origin.
Conditions Any soil; full sun to part shade.
Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 5a-10b.
Season of interest Summer to autumn.

MUHLENBERGIA DUMOSA

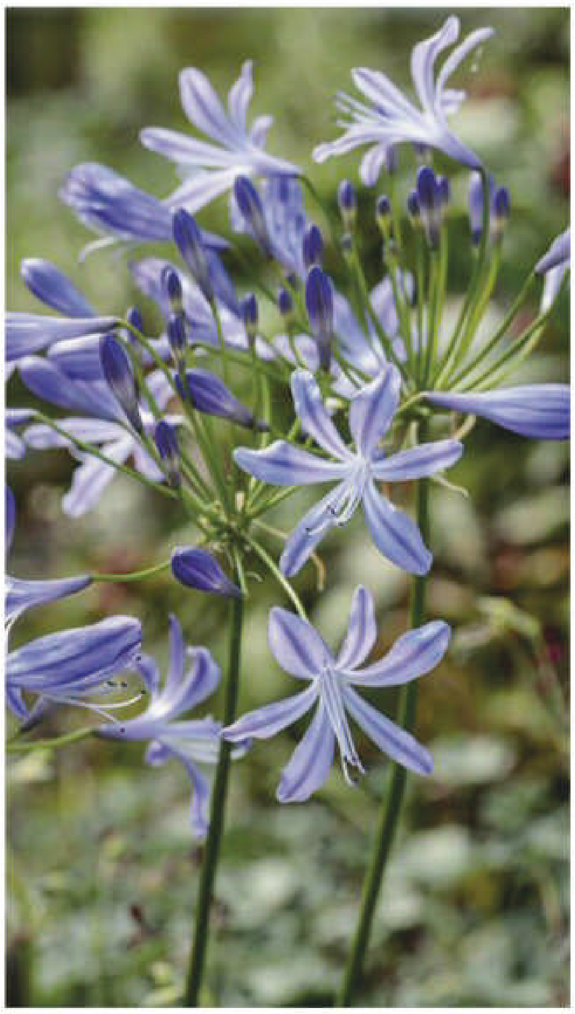
Muhlenbergia is a genus of grasses, native mostly to the American continent, and often referred to as muhly grasses. Many of the horticulturally renowned flowering species are not well suited to the UK's wetter climate, as our summers are not hot and dry enough for them to flower well. *Muhlenbergia dumosa* though is grown for its arching habit and foliage, more reminiscent of a bamboo, hence its common name of bamboo muhly. It can be grown in the open garden, but I prefer to grow mine in a large pot that I can bring in for the winter.

Height 90cm-1.2m.
Origin Southwestern USA, Mexico.
Conditions Sheltered site in well-drained, moisture-retentive soil; full sun to part shade.
Hardiness RHS H3, USDA 7a-10b.
Season of interest Year round.

AGAPANTHUS 'NEW BLUE'

Most of my choices this month are borderline hardy in the UK, and I'm afraid this agapanthus is yet another example. It may not be reliably hardy, but I love it for its large, flat flowers that are widely spaced in the flowerhead, producing a distinctive flower shape that appears to be more reminiscent of a blue-flowered nerine than an agapanthus. It is also one of the last to flower for me, which further enhances the autumn-flowering nerine similarity. Not surprisingly I grow mine with early flowering nerines, such as *Nerine undulata* Flexuosa Group.

Height 60cm.
Origin Garden (species South Africa).
Conditions Well-drained, moisture-retentive soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 7a-9b.
Season of interest Early autumn.



▷ Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 8JG. Tel 01782 646646, trentham.co.uk

Grasses were being championed by others in the UK, before the Oudolf phenomenon took off, notably by acclaimed grass expert Neil Lucas at **Knoll Gardens** near Wimborne in Dorset. Alongside the nursery, which perhaps sells a wider range of grasses than anywhere else in the UK, there is also the display gardens to be enjoyed, showing multiple uses of grasses in a garden setting. Timed slots to visit must be pre-booked. Stapehill Road, Hampreston, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 7ND. Tel 01202 873931, knollgardens.co.uk

The eight acres of **Sussex Prairie Garden** near Henfield in West Sussex has been planted to showcase grasses and other late summer-flowering plants on a larger scale, if maybe not quite so relevant for those of us with smaller plots. It's open with no need to book in advance. Morlands Farm, Wheatsheaf Road, nr Henfield, West Sussex BN5 9AT. Tel 01273 495902, sussexprairies.co.uk

Grasses are not the only highlight of early autumn. There are many colourful plants that help to bridge the gap between late summer and autumn proper. **Picton Garden & Old Court Nurseries**, which holds the National Collection of Michaelmas daisies, is always worth a visit at this time of year, although this year you will need to book in advance. Walwyn Road, Malvern, Worcestershire WR13 6QE. Tel 1684 540416, autumnasters.co.uk

There is also still time to get a burst of colour before **Great Comp Garden** in Kent closes on 31 October. Best known for its salvias it is also full of perennials, shrubs and trees, all curated by the talented William Dyson. Comp Lane, Platt, nr Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 8QS. Tel 01732 885094, greatcompgarden.co.uk ❏

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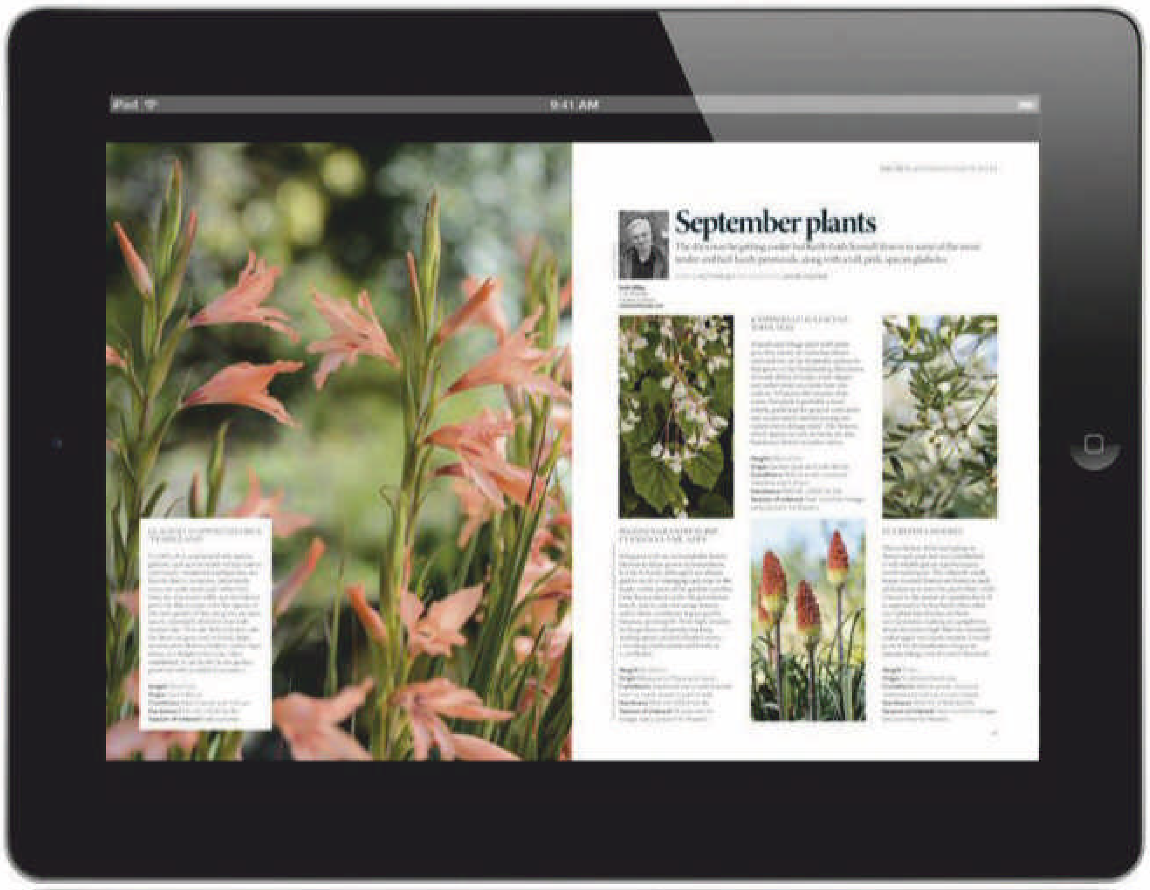
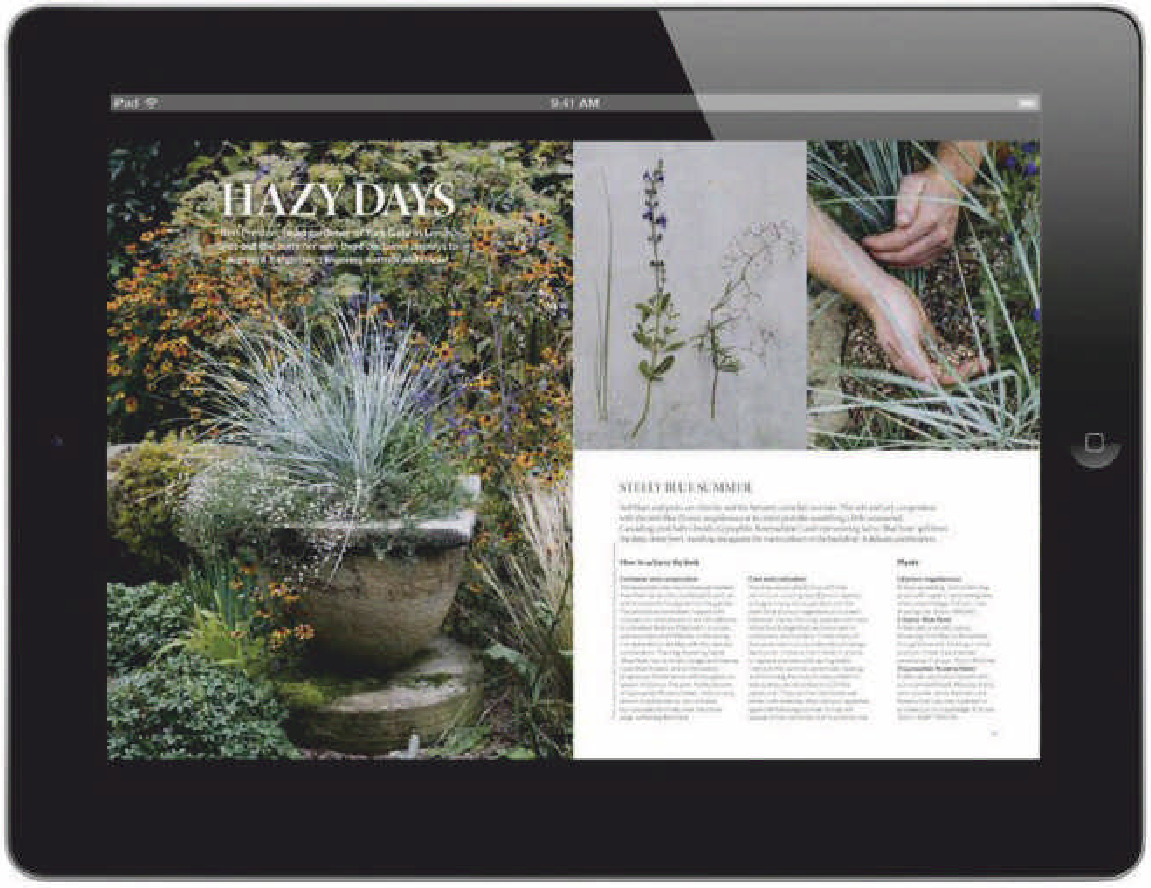

September plants

Southwest cool



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HARVEST MOON

The start of the season of misty mornings is one of Aaron's favourite times of the year. There is still time to ripen tomatoes on the vine, there are salads to pick, jams to make, and the first pears and apples are ready to eat

WORDS AARON BERTELSEN
ILLUSTRATION ALICE PATTULLO

Green tomato chutney

I love September. With its cool, misty mornings, warm, mellow days and everything in the garden reaching a peak of ripeness; it has a strong claim to being one of my favourite months of the year.

The workload should be manageable this month too. The weeds are less vigorous, and with luck we will have some rain, so you can focus your energies on harvesting. This is the time of year when the freezer comes into its own. I like to stash away fruit ready for when I have time to make jam, and tomatoes to liven up winter stews. Remember, though, a freezer is not a dumping ground. My rule is that all fruit and veg should be used within three months, and that the freezer must be empty again before the next growing season begins.

As the days get shorter, and the nights cooler, time will start to run out for tomatoes to ripen on the vine. The risk of blight will increase too. You will need to use your judgment in deciding when to pick them. If the forecast is for warm, sunny weather, leave them on the vine a little longer. Otherwise, I wait until they are showing some red, then pick them and put them on a sunny windowsill, spread out on some newspaper to ripen inside. Remember, better a jar or two of green tomato chutney than no crop at all.

It is time to start preparing for the colder weather, too. If you have a glasshouse for overwintering tender plants, this is the time to give it a clean and treat for pests and diseases. I like to have a good declutter too and get rid of any plants that are not earning their keep. ❐

Jobs for September

Check your brassicas. If they have grown well over the summer, they may be touching the netting you put over them now, leaving them vulnerable to attack from cabbage whites. Check the undersides of the leaves for the little yellow eggs, and make your cage of netting bigger. It's worth investing a bit of time now as you will need the netting through the winter too, to keep the pigeons at bay.

Parsnip foliage will be looking quite messy by now. I like to go through the rows and clean it up, both for aesthetic reasons and to make life harder for the slugs and snails that would otherwise shelter there.

Keep removing foliage from tomatoes, so the maximum possible sunlight gets to them. In previous years, I have been picking tomatoes well into October, and I really do think that taking the leaves off has helped to extend the cropping season and give us more ripe fruit.

Provided you have successfully avoided the attention of badgers, now is the time to harvest sweetcorn. You can tell when it's ripe and ready to eat as the hairs on the end of the ears will turn brown. Eat it as quickly as possible, before the sugars start to turn to starch.

As long as plants are cropping, they will need water. I like to weed one day, and water the next, leaving the weeds on the surface to break down. If you water immediately, there is danger that the weeds will re-root.

As the season starts to wind down, you can stop regular feeding of plants, both in the ground and in pots. Maybe you could put the time this frees up to good use by turning that soft fruit in the freezer into jam.

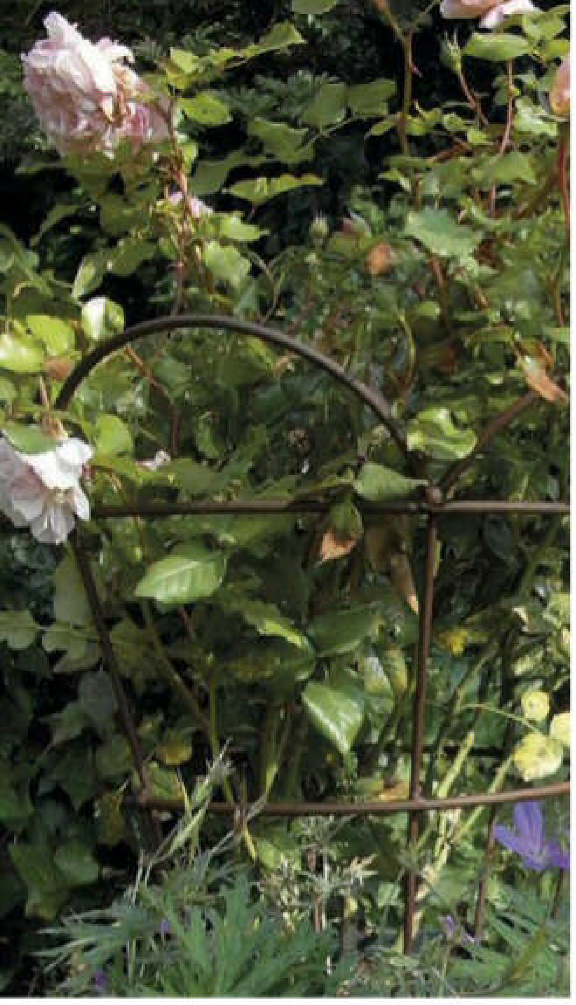
WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR CROPS

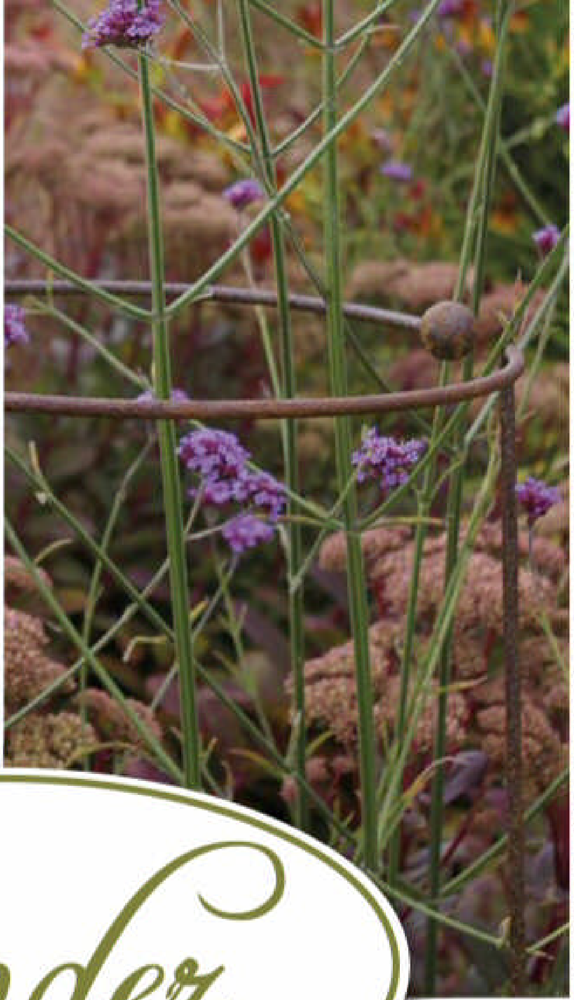
All those salad crops you sowed back in July should be thriving by now. The best way to keep them productive is to pick regularly, as this will stimulate new growth. I used to pick a few leaves from each plant, then one summer my friend's son Edward came to help. Being a mathematician, he preferred a much more methodical approach, cutting each plant in turn down to the ground, and working his way down the row. The regrowth is much more even this way, so now I do the same. Thanks, Edward.

The first apples and pears should be starting to ripen now. You can check when the fruit is ripe enough to eat by holding it in your hand and twisting gently. If it comes away easily, it's ready.

It was Albert Camus who described autumn as a 'second spring'. I wonder if he had peas in mind when he wrote those words? If you followed my advice and sowed again in July, just as the first crop was coming to an end, the second flush should be coming through around now. I like to add the shoots and the flowers to salads for a burst of fresh pea flavour, or make a simple side dish to enjoy while the weather is still warm.

You can find Aaron's delicious peas and pea shoots recipe at gardensillustrated.com/recipes





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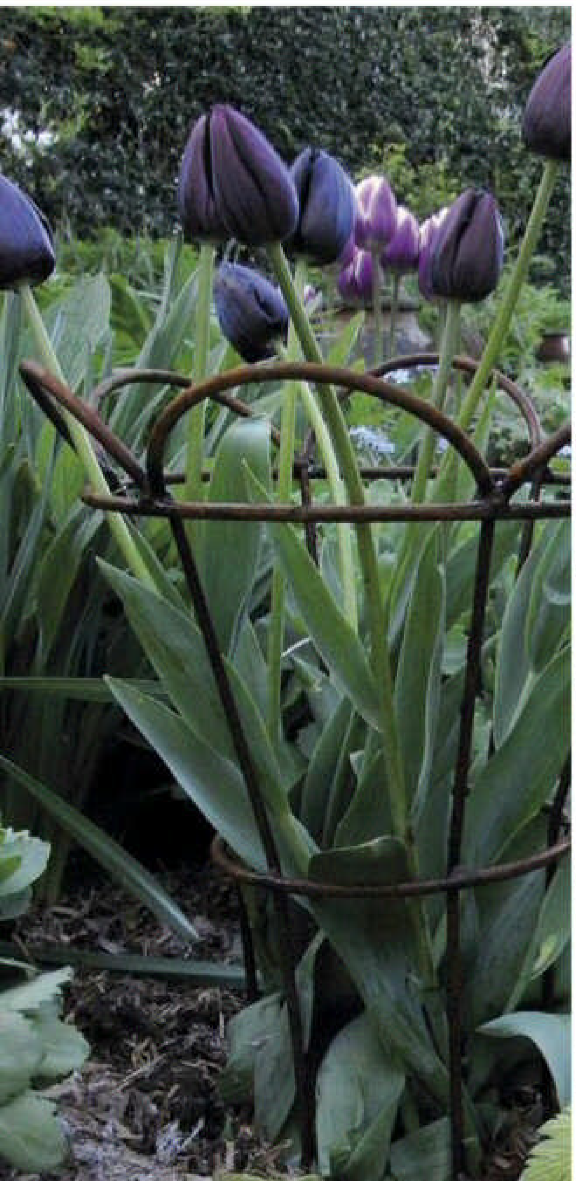

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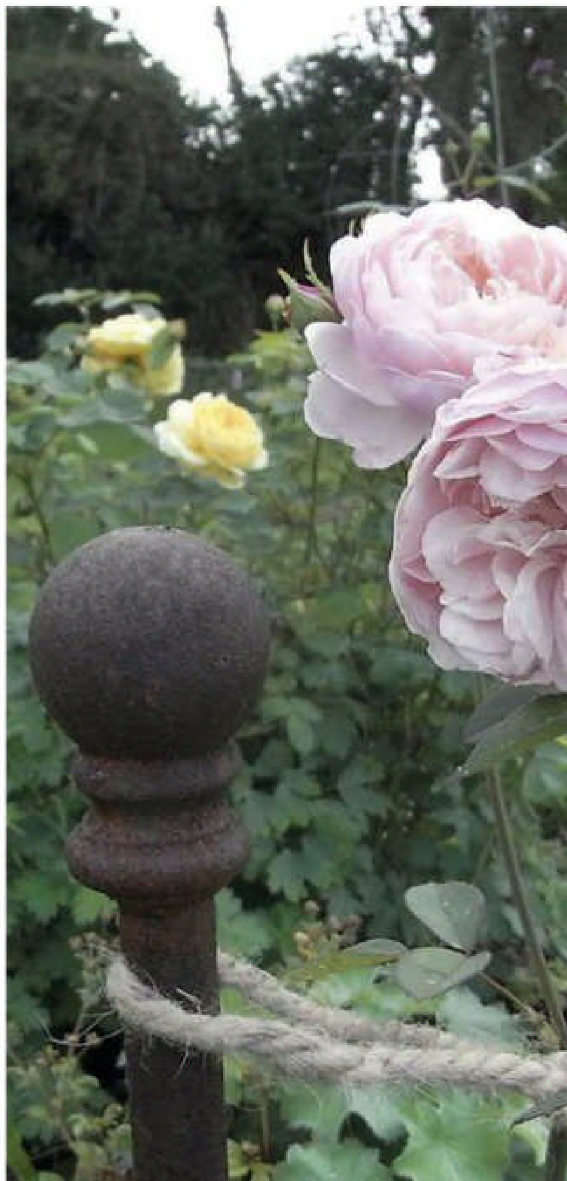


> We are privileged caretakers, and should be taking care of what we've been given

GARDENING TALENT

TRACEY SPOKES

Tracey is head gardener at Kelmarsh Hall – she's also a florist and gardener at a private estate with a boundless energy for gardening

PORTRAIT ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Earliest garden memory Lying on the flagstone garden path in the sunshine watching my Dad grow his runner beans, roses and sweet peas, while I was drawing pictures of flowers, dragons and castles. I went on to become an illustrator of children's books.

Horticultural heroes All of the unsung ones – all of the allotment holders, the volunteers, the back garden enthusiasts, the gardening club members, the triers and those who simply have a go at it... Gardeners who have no reward or recognition for their toils, they just do it for the absolute love of it.

Worthwhile tips Garden with your eyes: look at what needs doing; look at what is working for you and what isn't. And keep looking. My second tip, which admittedly is easier said than done, is 'Don't worry!' Your garden is there to make you smile. The countless mental and physical benefits from being active outside in the fresh air will all disappear if you spend your time worrying and stressing about what should be.

Favourite planting style I love flowers and plants to find their own way: I'm slightly obsessed with the self-sown, the unkempt and the growing old disgracefully. This makes my position here at Kelmarsh Hall all the more exciting, as the gardens' heyday is attributed to the American socialite and shabby chic founder Nancy Lancaster and the garden designer Norah Lindsay. Nancy loved the slightly sad and nostalgic, and Norah the romance, and it is my job to bring these gardens back to their former glory.

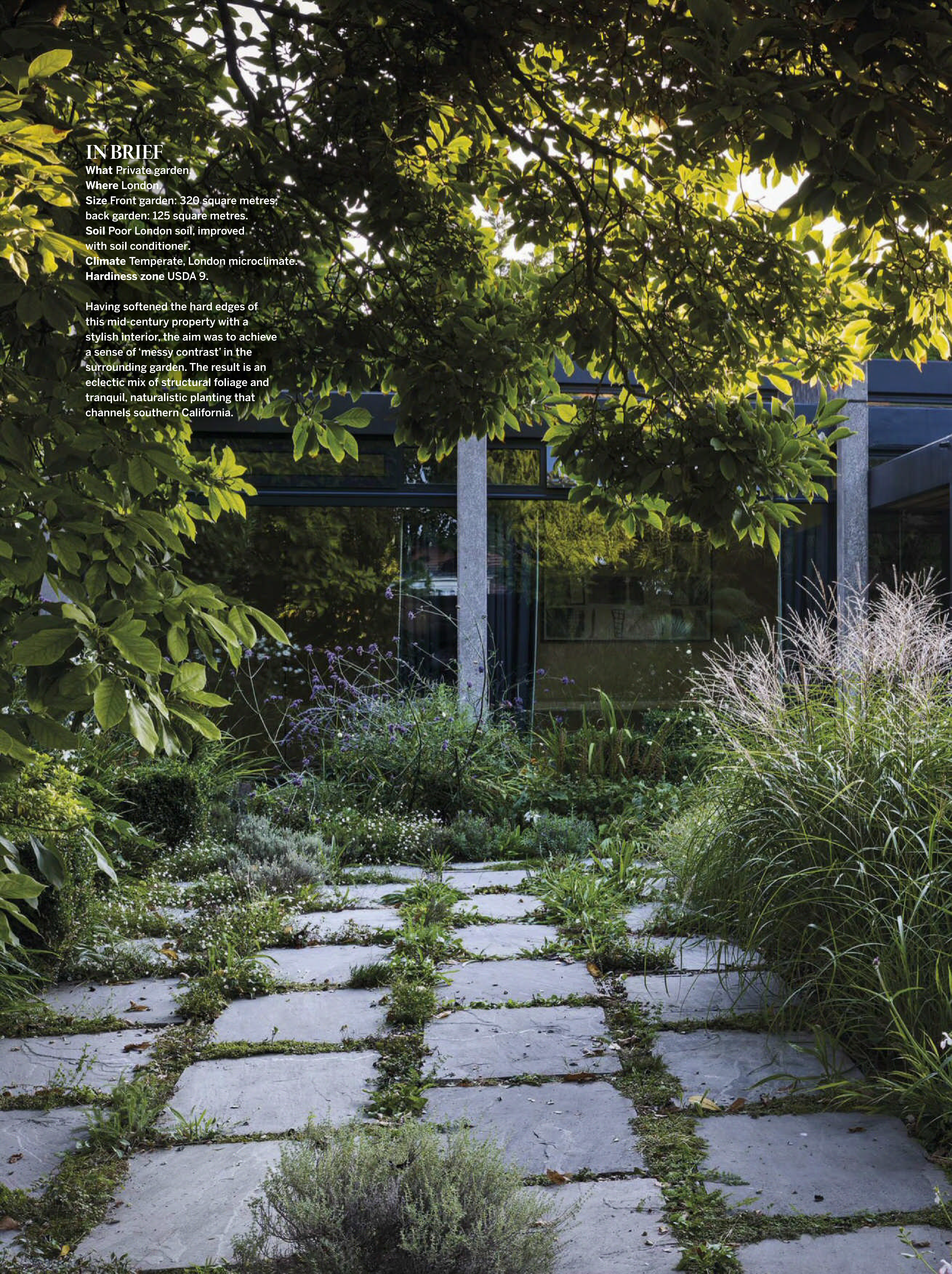
What principles have guided your attitude to gardening? We only really ever borrow our gardens, and it is up to us not only to preserve our past, but to welcome the future. We are very privileged caretakers, and should be taking care of what we have been given. Let's not mess it up.

What about the future? Horticulture cannot afford to be elitist. Now is not the time. It is a profession for some, a hobby for others, and for some, just a walk in the park, but it touches us all. We would do well to remember that.

Favourite gardening books I have collected old gardening books for years. Favourites include a 1905 copy of William Robinson's *The English Flower Garden* and Volumes 1 and 2 of *Wild Flowers of the British Isles*, with the most exquisite watercolour illustrations by H Isabel Adams in 1907. Hours can be lost devouring the gardening folklore of times gone by.

Contact Instagram flowerstory13

For up-to-date details of Kelmarsh Hall & Gardens' opening times, visit kelmarsh.com



IN BRIEF

What Private garden.
Where London.
Size Front garden: 320 square metres; back garden: 125 square metres.
Soil Poor London soil, improved with soil conditioner.
Climate Temperate, London microclimate.
Hardiness zone USDA 9.

Having softened the hard edges of this mid-century property with a stylish interior, the aim was to achieve a sense of 'messy contrast' in the surrounding garden. The result is an eclectic mix of structural foliage and tranquil, naturalistic planting that channels southern California.

Southwest cool

Exotic evergreens provide structure for diverse planting in soft greens and whites, taking a London garden to West Coast America and beyond

WORDS **MATT COLLINS** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**

Adam Sykes found his dream house project by chance along an unlikely street in southwest London: an intriguing example of Modernist architecture surrounded by Edwardian houses. Evocative of the Californian-style homes in and around Los Angeles – where Adam had lived – he got straight to work beautifully remodelling the interior of this 1960s' Brutalist relic. From the very start, however, one eye was turned to the garden: "There was a very conventional and formal city garden here originally; I wanted to redevelop it into something much softer and less rigid, to complement the house."

Having previously worked with Andrew Eden of Town and Country Gardens on his former roof garden in South Kensington, Adam asked Andrew to begin developing an initial planting design. "The first thing I said was, 'you've got to have palm trees'," notes Andrew. Coastal evergreens are the defining feature here: a magnificent fan palm (*Washingtonia robusta*) stands close to the house, furnishing an open-plan kitchen/dining area with an air of laid-back exoticism, along with a shimmering black pine, spiky *Trachycarpus* and a feather-leafed jelly palm (*Butia capitata*).

To say that this garden has a distinctive West Coast America influence, however, would be telling only half of the story: the planting palette is much more diverse and eclectic than that. A full lap of the garden – which encircles the house with contrasting sections – will draw one past shrubby Mediterranean herbs, towering Australian tree ferns, shade-loving perennials from the forests of Japan and Korea, Canary Island echiums and the tightly clipped box of Old England. "We have everything from cycads to Austrian pines here," says Andrew. Yet it all draws together with impeccable coherence. Cream-yellow scabious (*Scabiosa columbaria* subsp. *ochroleuca*) marries beautifully with *Miscanthus* and *Pennisetum* grasses, while the grey-blue of a dwarf juniper creeps out on to a paved pathway edged with bright *Crocosmia* x *crocosmiiflora* 'Columbus', bee-smothered sea holly and lofty *Verbena bonariensis*. Something of an anchor for the overall scheme, *Hakonechloa* grass is used to great effect throughout the garden, a continuous thread stitching all elements together. "The only things I kept from the previous garden are the arbutus, acacia and magnolia trees," says Adam. Thrusting from the magnolia's deep shade are bright anemones and the unusual pinnatifid foliage and luminous yellow bellflowers of *Kirengeshoma palmata* Koreana Group – striking eastern woodlanders embellishing a London garden staple.

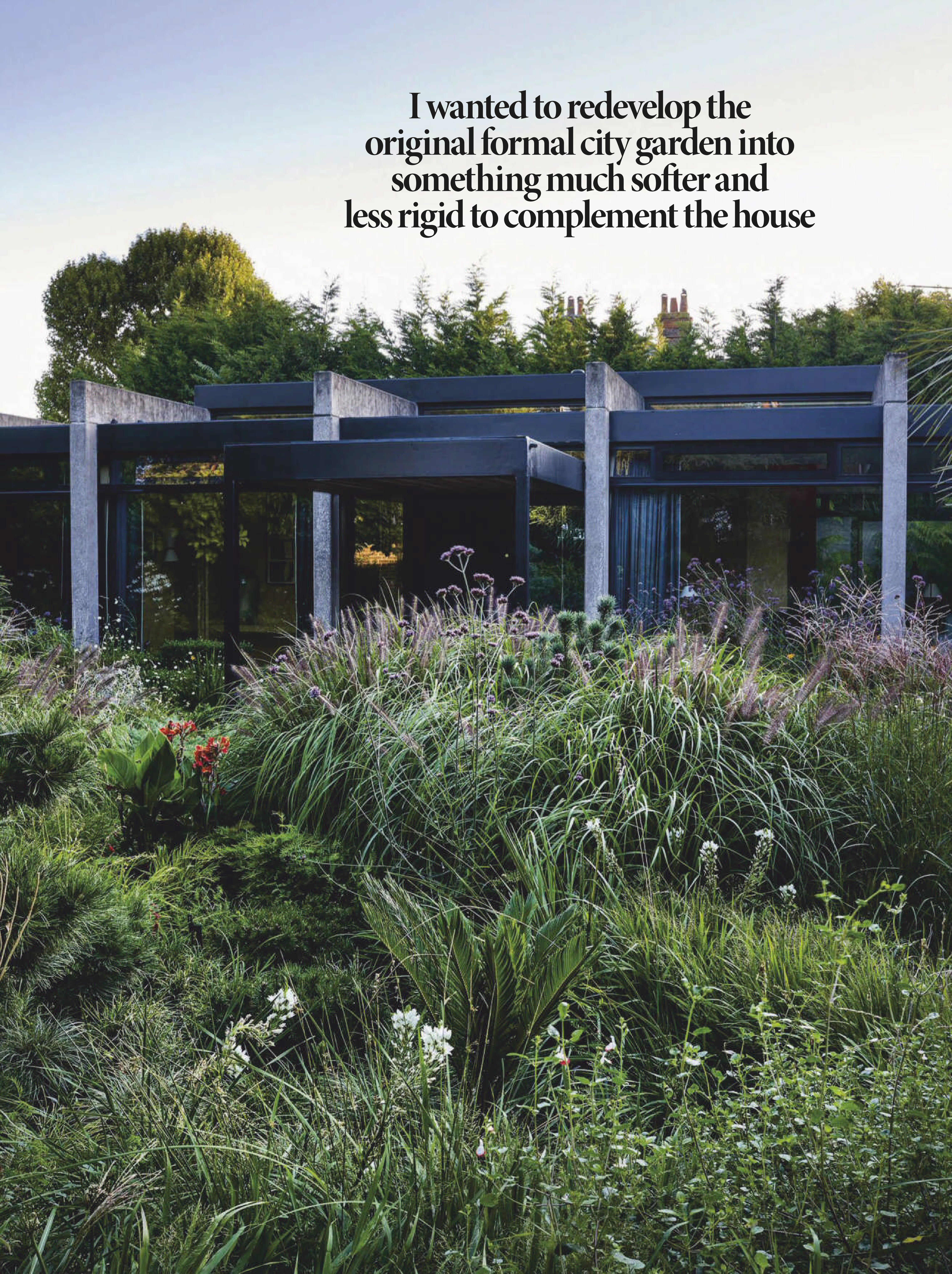
For both client and designer this garden is an ongoing project and experimentation is an integral component. Colourful perennials, including *Gaura*, penstemons and *Salvia nemorosa,* are trialled in between an evergreen structure that offers year-round interest. "The space has developed massively over the four years I've had it," says Adam. "There was far more paving to begin with, but we've gradually reduced it as the planting has expanded." Andrew describes this evolutionary process as an "entertaining and fulfilling journey", during the course of which only a couple of plants have faltered. "An *Edgeworthia* and a *Bismarckia* palm proved just a little too tender for this location. Otherwise, pretty much everything seems to do very well here." This is partly thanks to an investment in improving soil quality. Having inherited poor London clay, Andrew's team rotovated in tons (literally) of soil conditioner. "Perhaps we integrated a bit too much in some places," says Andrew. "The thalictrums grew to over seven foot tall! But the conditioner is necessary to keep everything happy."

From the paved driveway – softened by naturalistically plug-planted *Erigeron* daisy and knapweed – Adam leads past a seated terrace and recalls peaceful afternoons and enjoyable evenings entertaining guests ("the palms lit up at night look absolutely spectacular") and relaxing with the windows slid open to the garden (the house walls are mostly glass). Rosemary and bunchgrass spill in from the borders, charmingly blurring the threshold. We stoop below a vigorous *Tetrapanax* on our way to the rear of the house, where an entirely different scene awaits us. Here, a more refined planting palette consists of loosely grouped tree ferns (*Dicksonia antarctica*) underplanted by lush *Hakonechloa* grown tall under the shadier conditions. The effect is wonderfully calming, intended to be viewed, almost like an installation, through the wide, single-storey windows. The surrounding walls are draped with star jasmine (*Trachelospermum jasminoides*), trapping a glorious fragrance that carries indoors. Scattered *Buxus* balls and a stand of bright Himalayan birch spring from a gravel mulch, further complementing the green and white planting scheme.

The rear garden's pared-back feel acts as a soothing contrast to the more elaborate front, where an element of drama plays out in the continuously shifting colours. "I like the fact that it's such eclectic planting," Adam enthuses. "Every time I come home I'm delighted by this garden – visitors are just wowed by it." Above all, however, he is pleased to have conjured a more than fitting setting for his Californian-style refuge. □

Turn the page for more of Adam's garden and 12 key plants

The clean lines of Adam's strikingly Modernist, single storey house, designed in 1963 by architects Peter Foggo and David Thomas, are softened by a mix of colourful perennials and vigorous ornamental grasses, including *Miscanthus sinensis,* which integrate seamlessly with cycads, pine and palm trees to create a relaxed, transcontinental feel.



I wanted to redevelop the original formal city garden into something much softer and less rigid to complement the house

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12 KEY PLANTS

1 *Pinus nigra* Stout Mediterranean pine with a bushy habit, known as black or Austrian pine. Tolerant of most soils and sites but prefers full sun. 12m. RHS H7, USDA 4a-7b[†].

2 *Miscanthus sinensis* Erect, clump-forming perennial grass with feathery, late-summer plumes that fade through autumn. 1-1.5m. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

3 *Dicksonia antarctica* Spectacular tree fern from the forests of eastern Australia with impressively large fronds. Thrives in a moist, semi-shade environment. Looks best planted with complementary woodland plants. 4m. AGM[*]. RHS H3, USDA 9a-10b.

4 *Yucca rostrata* Evergreen yucca from southeastern USA and north Mexico, known as the beaked yucca. Sword-shaped, glaucous leaves form a sphere atop a woody stem and surround attractive, creamy-white, summer flowers that grow in clusters from a tall central spire. Best suited to a gravel or Mediterranean planting scheme. 3.5m. RHS H5, USDA 5a-10b.

5 *Cycas revoluta* Sago palm with tough, deep-green, shimmering foliage. A native of southern Japan, it prefers a sheltered position, bearing cone-like inflorescences in summer. A show-stopper evergreen for the dry garden. 80cm. AGM. RHS H2, USDA 9a-10b.

6 *Verbena bonariensis* Reliable, vigorous and long-flowering perennial extending compact, flat flowerheads of light purple. A tall, branching habit allows it to float above dense planting schemes. Leave stems for structural winter interest. 12m. AGM. RHS H4, USDA 7a-11b.

7 *Betula utilis* Fast-growing, architectural Himalayan birch with bright, paper-white bark. Excellent tree for small or urban gardens, and looks best when grouped. Foliage turns a rich golden yellow in autumn. 12m. RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.

8 *Washingtonia robusta* Large, tender, evergreen palm with a fast-growing, slender trunk and fan-shaped leaves with elongated individual leaflets. Very attractive grown in pots, both indoors and out, but will struggle at temperatures below -5°C. 12m. RHS H1C.

9 *Hakonechloa macra* A clump-forming, herbaceous bunchgrass turning lush green to bronze in autumn, and remaining an attractive light yellow through winter. A versatile underplant preferring sun to shade, *H. macra* will tolerate most soils and exposed sites. Needs to be kept moist, however. 40cm. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.

10 *Tetrapanax papyrifer* 'Rex' A popular, paddle-leafed, Taiwanese native with an impressive, arching habit. Enormous, lobed leaves are raised on slender stems from a small, central trunk. Suckers allow it to spread, although these can be removed if undesired. 4m. RHS H4.

11 *Butia capitata* A hardy, feather-leaf palm from Brazil, known as the jelly palm. A spray of fine, curving leaves stem from a dense trunk that grows as well in a pot as it does in the ground. Remove tatty lower leaves to keep looking fresh. 10m. AGM. USDA 9a-11b.

12 *Scabiosa columbaria* subsp. *ochroleuca* A clump-forming perennial producing a mass of creamy-white to pale yellow, pincushion-style flowers on branching, wiry stems with narrow, grey-green leaves. Plant in full sun on well-drained soil. 80cm. RHS H5, USDA 4a-9b.

[*] Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. [†] Hardiness ratings given where available.

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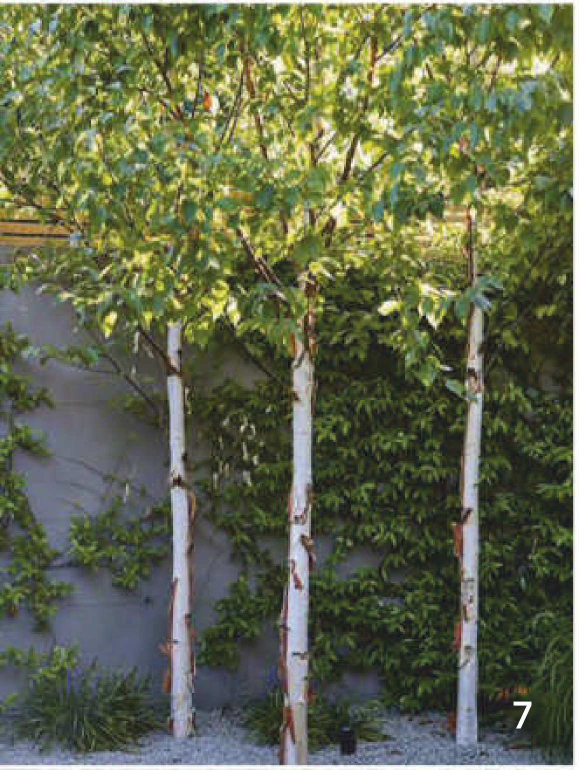
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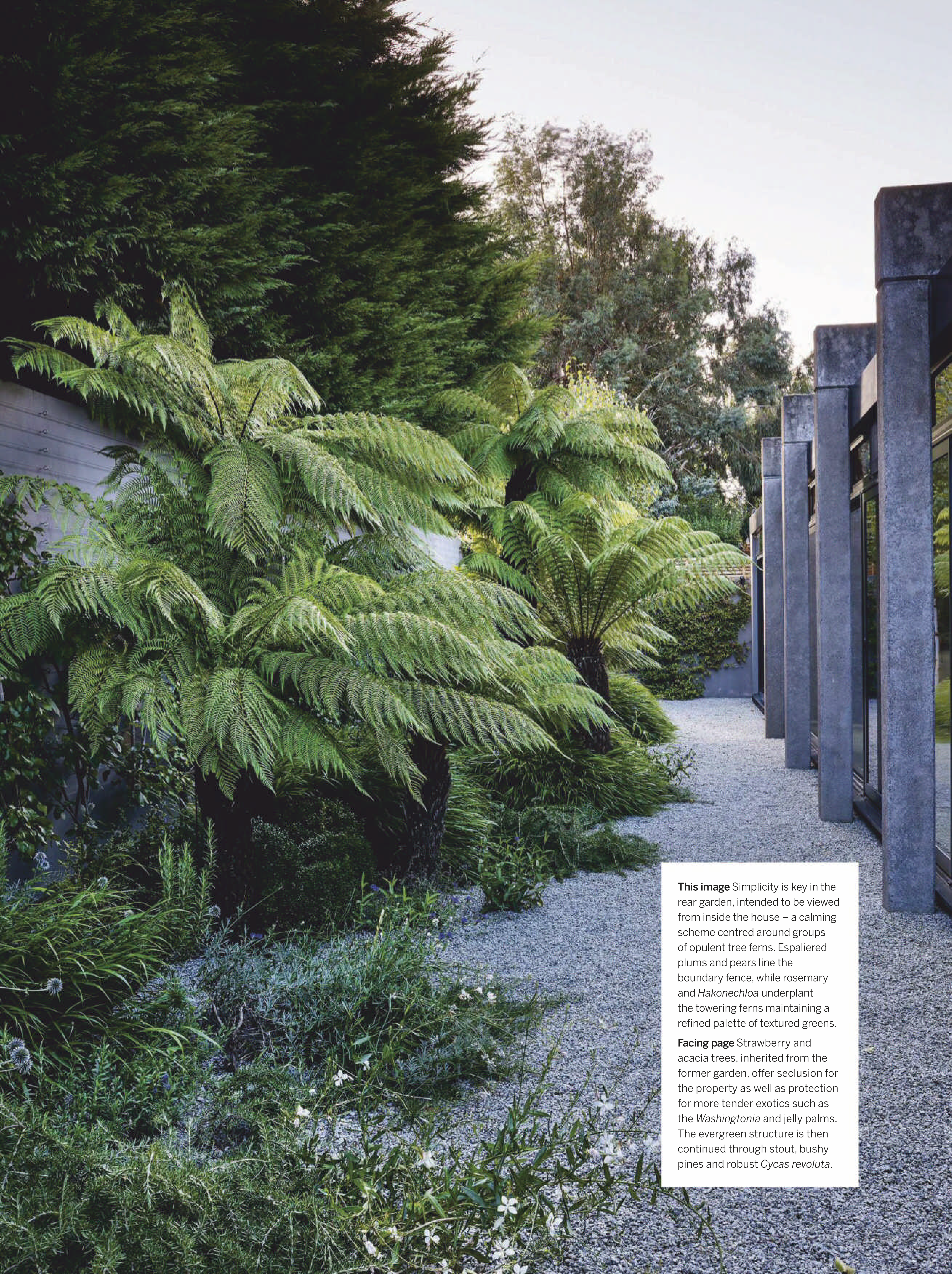
Something of an anchor for the overall scheme, grasses create a continuous thread, stitching all the elements together

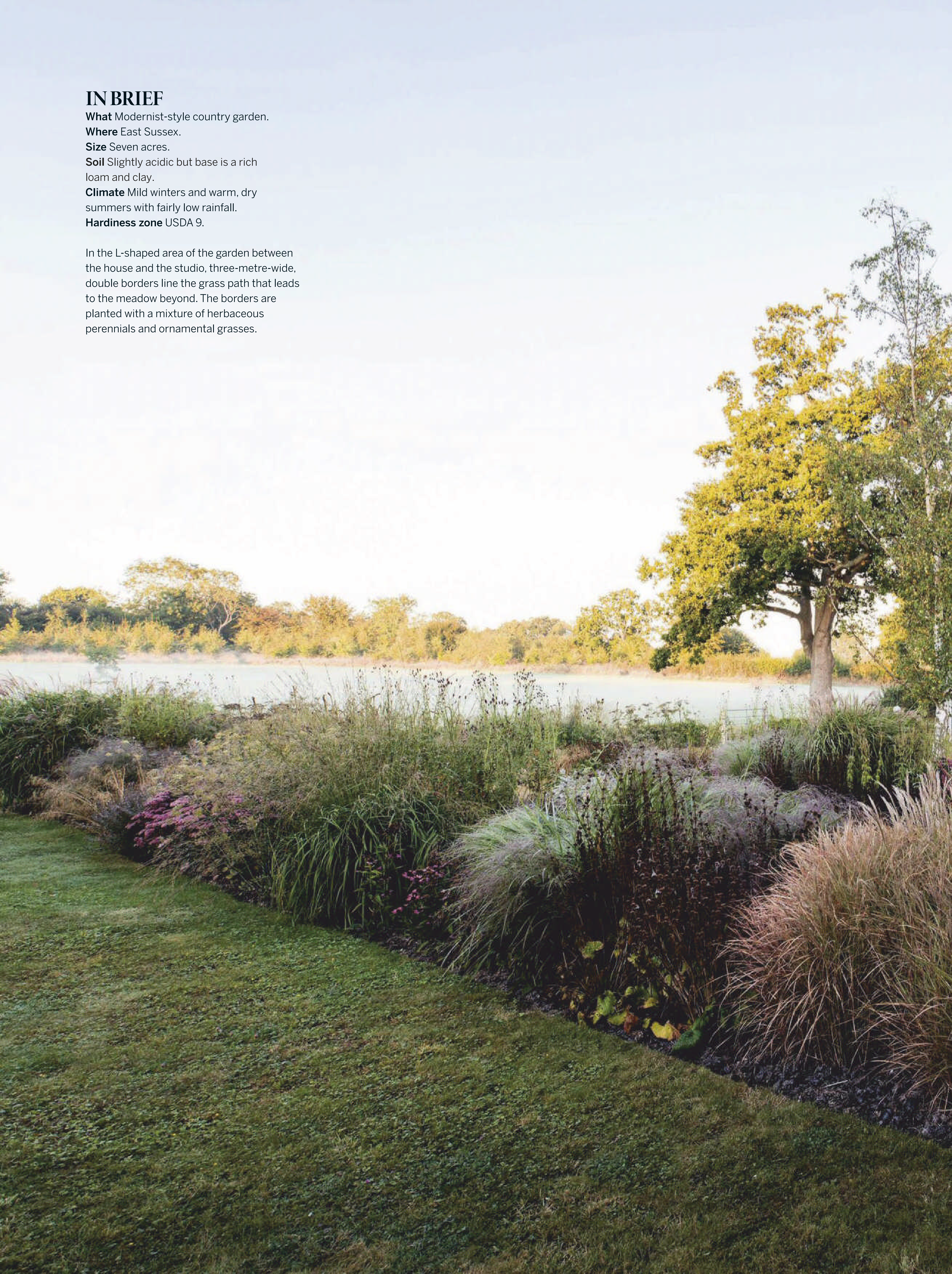
A well-worked soil, improved with lots of organic matter, promotes happy, healthy growth: flourishing clumps of dazzling *Crocosmia* x *crocosmiiflora* 'Columbus', *Verbena bonariensis* and *Scabiosa columbaria* subsp. *ochroleuca* leave little room for gaps in the borders, and a *Washingtonia robusta* adds an essence of coastal California.



This image Simplicity is key in the rear garden, intended to be viewed from inside the house – a calming scheme centred around groups of opulent tree ferns. Espaliered plums and pears line the boundary fence, while rosemary and *Hakonechloa* underplant the towering ferns maintaining a refined palette of textured greens.

Facing page Strawberry and acacia trees, inherited from the former garden, offer seclusion for the property as well as protection for more tender exotics such as the *Washingtonia* and jelly palms. The evergreen structure is then continued through stout, bushy pines and robust *Cycas revoluta*.

Coastal evergreens are the defining feature here but tell only part of the story



IN BRIEF

What Modernist-style country garden.
Where East Sussex.
Size Seven acres.
Soil Slightly acidic but base is a rich loam and clay.
Climate Mild winters and warm, dry summers with fairly low rainfall.
Hardiness zone USDA 9.

In the L-shaped area of the garden between the house and the studio, three-metre-wide, double borders line the grass path that leads to the meadow beyond. The borders are planted with a mixture of herbaceous perennials and ornamental grasses.

A fine balance

Drawing on Modernist principles of sharp, clean lines, a strong visual relationship between house, landscape and garden, and just the right amount of prairie-style planting, Emma Burrill has created a perfectly proportionate whole in a quiet corner of East Sussex

WORDS STEPHANIE DONALDSON PHOTOGRAPHS CLAIRE TAKACS

An early morning autumn mist hangs atmospherically over the lawns and meadows of Emma Burrill's garden near Rye in East Sussex, softening the contrast between the areas of planting and the wide, open spaces. Later, as the sun banishes the mist, a Modernist-style layout is revealed. Behind the house, wide, double borders, richly planted with perennials and grasses, frame the central grass path that leads the eye to the gently upward-sloping meadow and the woodland beyond. On the far side of the studio, where Emma works, is a prairie garden planted predominantly with North American native plants, all grown or propagated by Emma. Previous owners had used this area as a sand school for their horses, so once Emma had removed the underlying membrane she had a ready-made, low-fertility sand bed – perfect for prairie plants. Alongside there is an extensive, recently planted orchard and a traditional Kentish cobnut plat (the local phrase for a cobnut orchard, an important landscape characteristic of the neighbouring Kent Downs).

Seven years ago, when Emma and her graphic artist husband Anthony bought the house, there was no garden to speak of, just a mass of willow seedlings, paddocks and a lot of blackthorn scrub. "We spent the first two years clearing the site and rebuilding the house," says Emma. "The old stables were demolished and we built our studio on the same footprint. I drew an overall plan of the garden when we began the project. Each year we add a new element as we slowly build the larger picture. In our first year we planted 550 native tree whips as part of a Woodland Trust scheme as well as the cobnut plat, laid out on a traditional, offset grid. In order to divide up the space and make sense of the huge, open area, I began to plant a series of hedges using the sight lines of the house and existing landmarks to connect the indoor space with the garden and wider landscape. Over the past four years we have added the borders and orchard."

It was after studying fine art photography at the Royal College of Art, followed by a period working as an illustrator in London for a number of years, that Emma moved back to her home county with her family. Since then she has worked regularly as a garden volunteer and studied garden design to help inform her approach to the garden. Her chief inspiration is the Dutch garden designer and landscape architect Mien Ruys.

"I love her as much for her style and ethos as for the fact that she was a woman paving a career in a very male-dominated occupation," says Emma. "The fact that she was designing cutting-edge, simple, geometric spaces as early as 1924 in a climate of romanticism – and her more recent accolade as a leader in the New Perennial Movement – are remarkable. Her use of a Modernist underlay overplanted with loose and wild plantings is a constant inspiration for me."

You can see that influence here where Emma has worked to achieve the underlying structure of a Modernist-style garden with defined areas and a connection to the architecture within it and the landscape beyond. "I have linked areas of the garden so that it sits well when viewed from the house or when the house is viewed from the garden. The width of doors and windows or the spaces between them informs the width of borders and the terrace and lawn. The hornbeam hedges also work as wildlife corridors creating links to the native hedges we have planted all around the boundaries and further to the woodland beyond. I am gardening primarily for biodiversity."

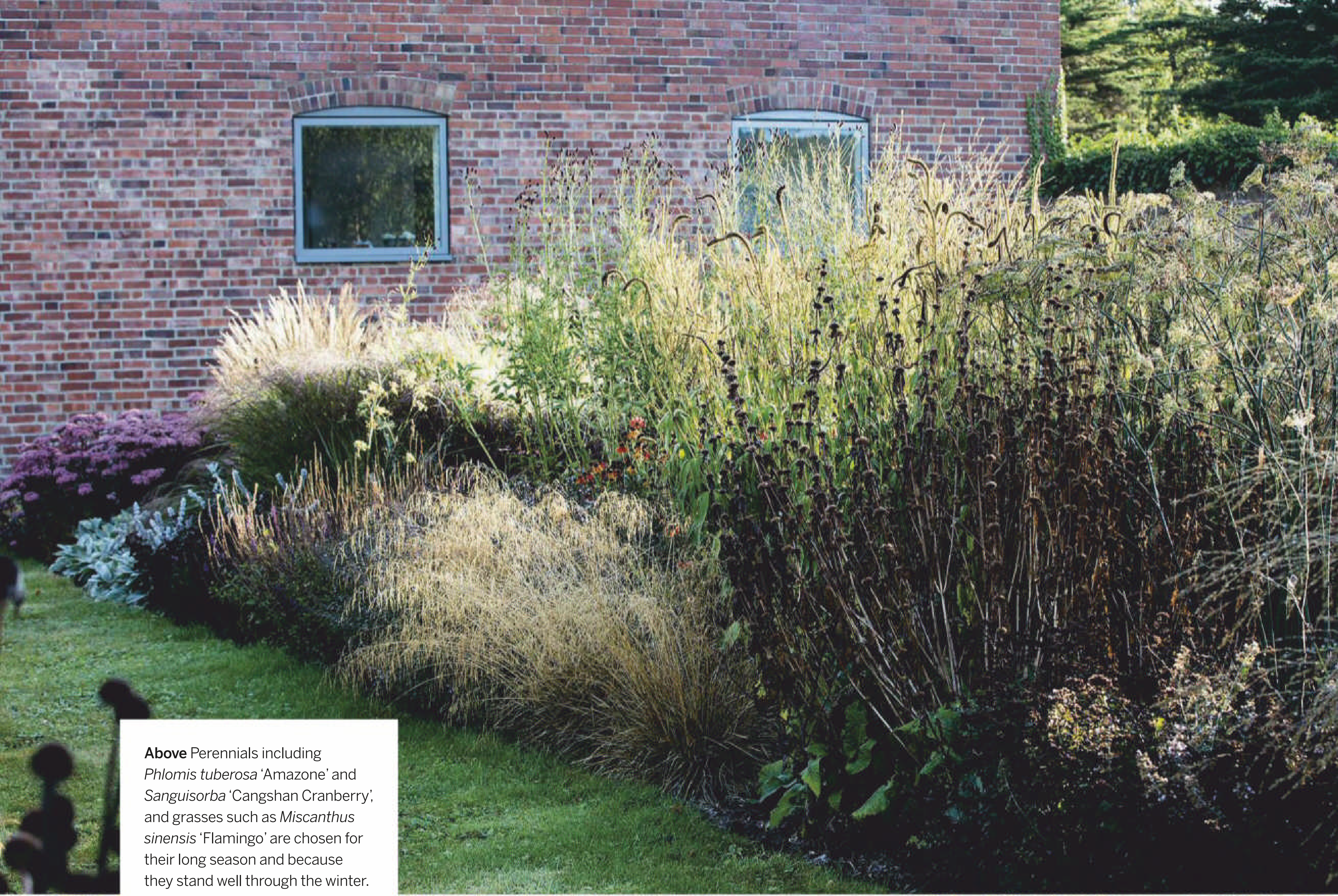
The balance between letting nature in and nature taking over is a fine one and in areas such as the prairie it is always at tipping point. "I love the point where order meets disorder," explains Emma. "I relish the appearance of uninvited plants, and by allowing local wild plants to creep in, the whole garden softens and connects me to the landscape beyond."

September is a favourite month when Emma's favourite grass, *Miscanthus*, comes into its own in combinations of upright structures covered in seedheads. "The washed-out colour at this time of the year creates a very calm atmosphere. All focus is on form, texture and movement." □

Turn the page to see more of Emma's garden and details of 12 key plants

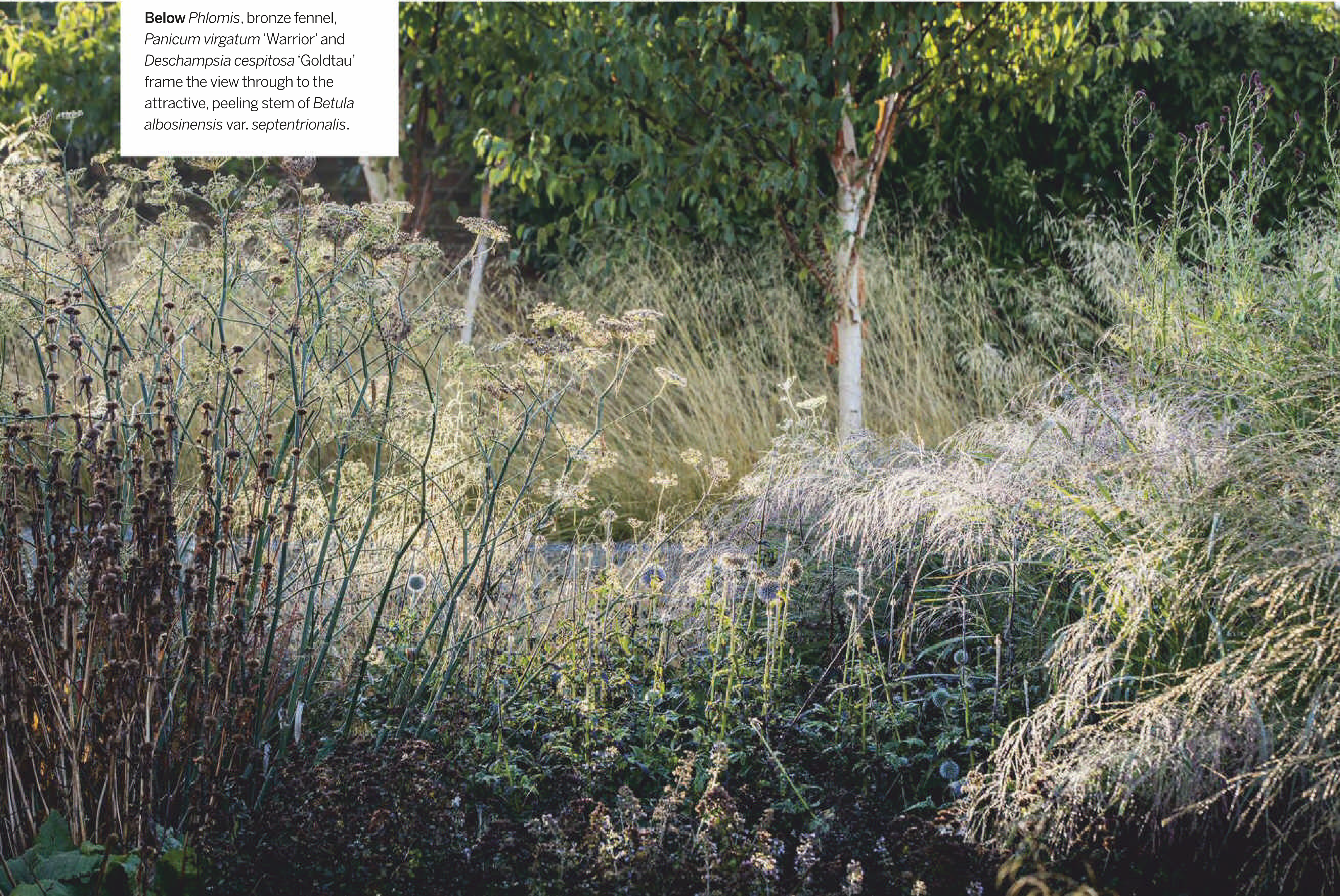
A covered deck links the two rooms of the studio and creates a window that perfectly frames the view of the prairie and the trees beyond. The yellow chairs and table from made.com echo the colours of the prairie plants.

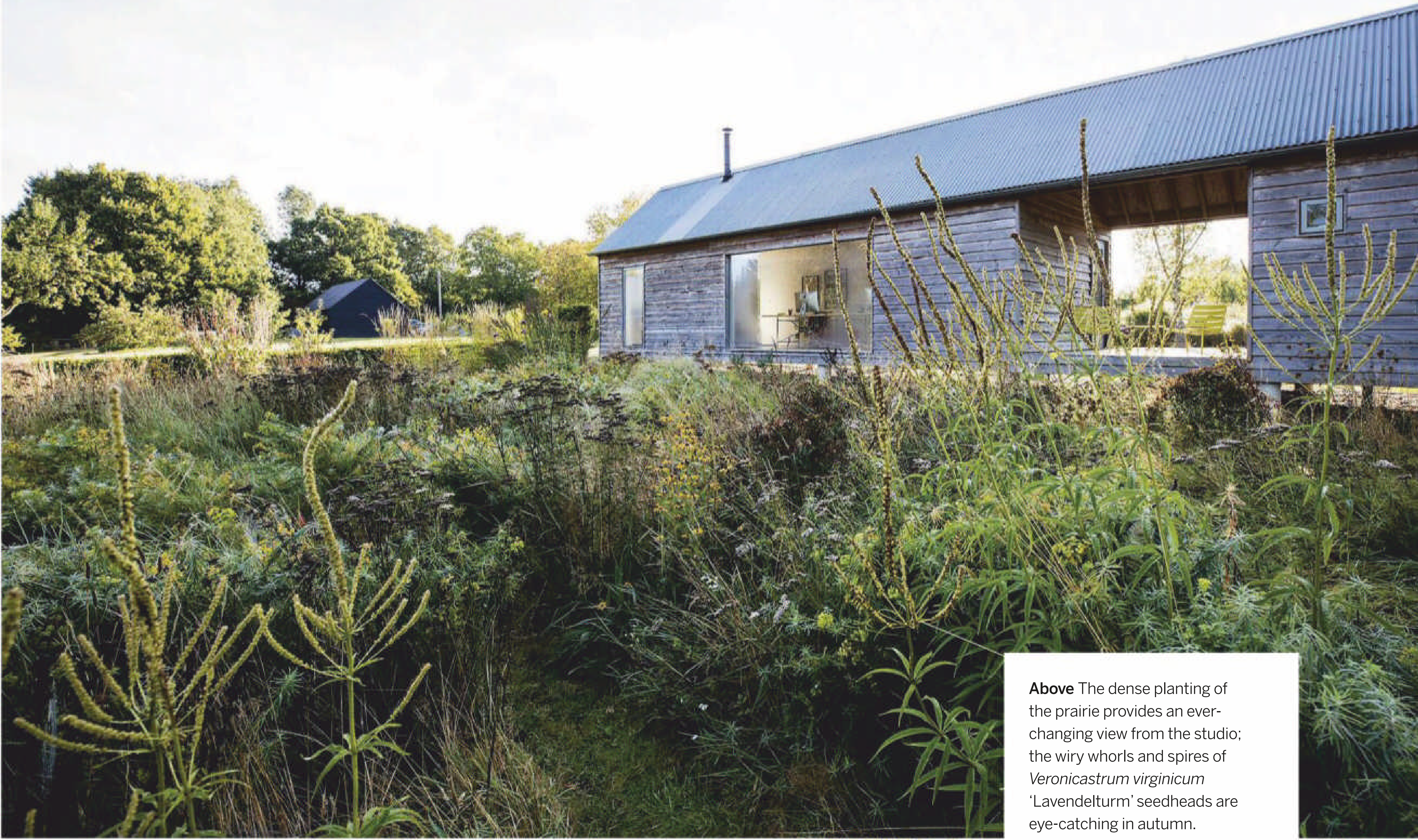
I love the point where order meets disorder. I relish the appearance of uninvited plants; by allowing wild plants to creep in, the whole garden softens and connects me to the landscape beyond



Above Perennials including *Phlomis tuberosa* 'Amazone' and *Sanguisorba* 'Cangshan Cranberry', and grasses such as *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Flamingo' are chosen for their long season and because they stand well through the winter.

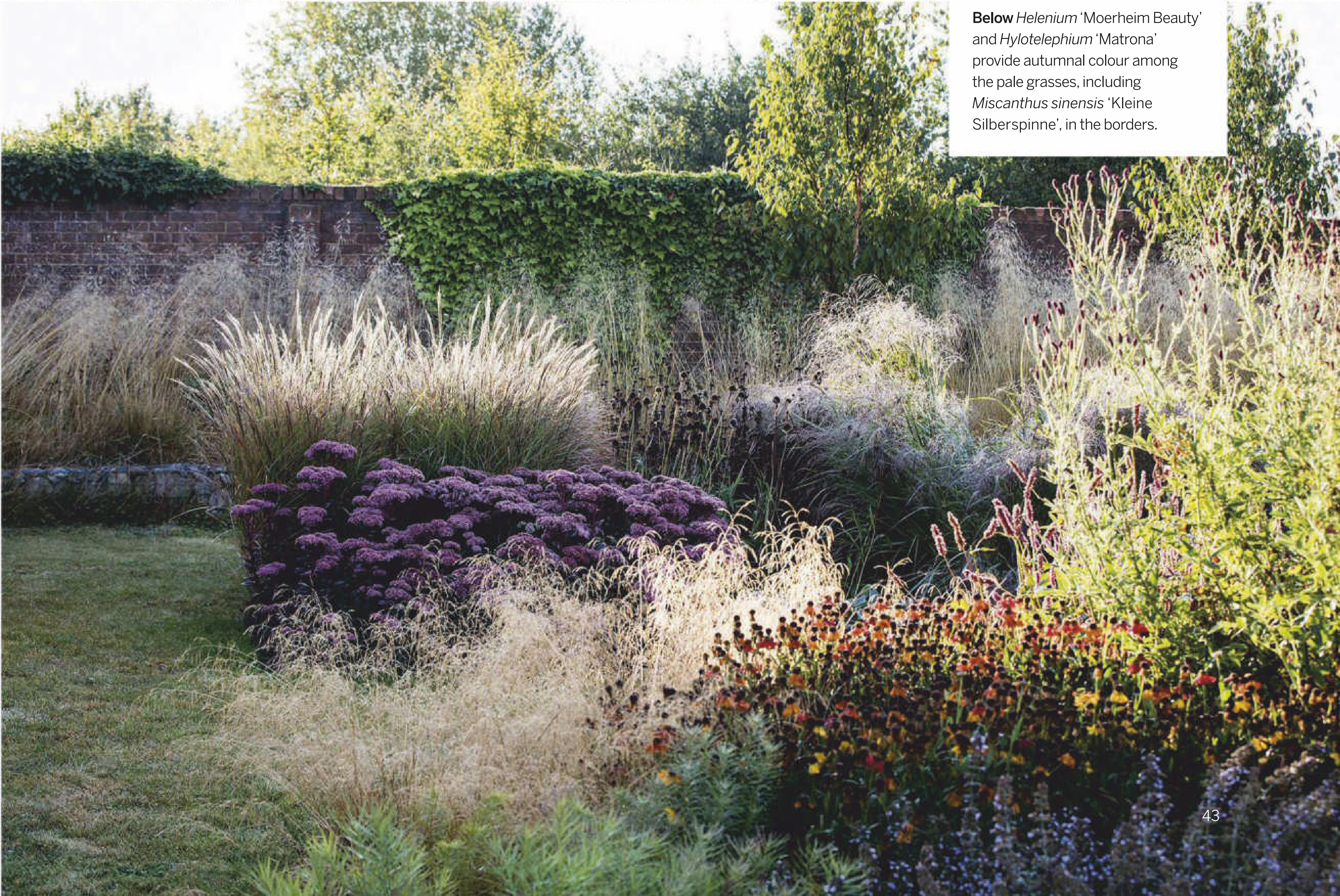
Below *Phlomis*, bronze fennel, *Panicum virgatum* 'Warrior' and *Deschampsia cespitosa* 'Goldtau' frame the view through to the attractive, peeling stem of *Betula albosinensis* var. *septentrionalis*.

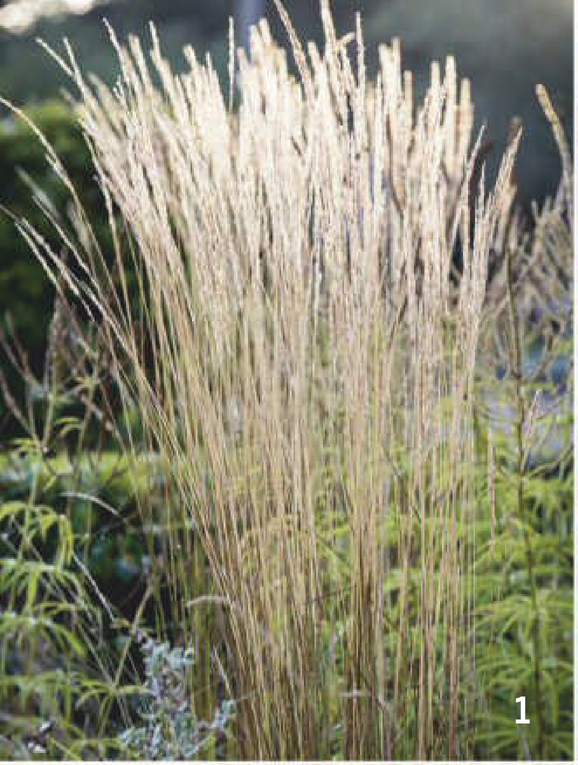




Above The dense planting of the prairie provides an ever-changing view from the studio; the wiry whorls and spires of *Veronicastrum virginicum* 'Lavendelturm' seedheads are eye-catching in autumn.

Below *Helenium* 'Moerheim Beauty' and *Hylotelephium* 'Matrona' provide autumnal colour among the pale grasses, including *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Kleine Silberspinne', in the borders.

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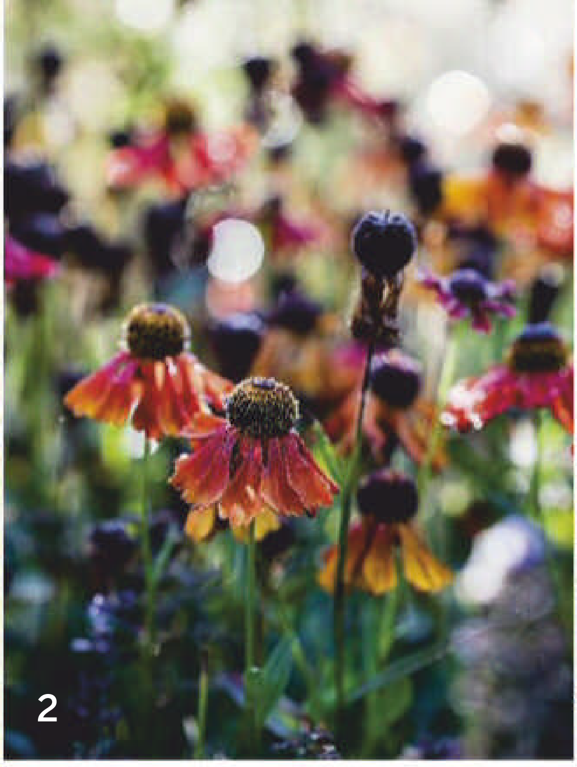
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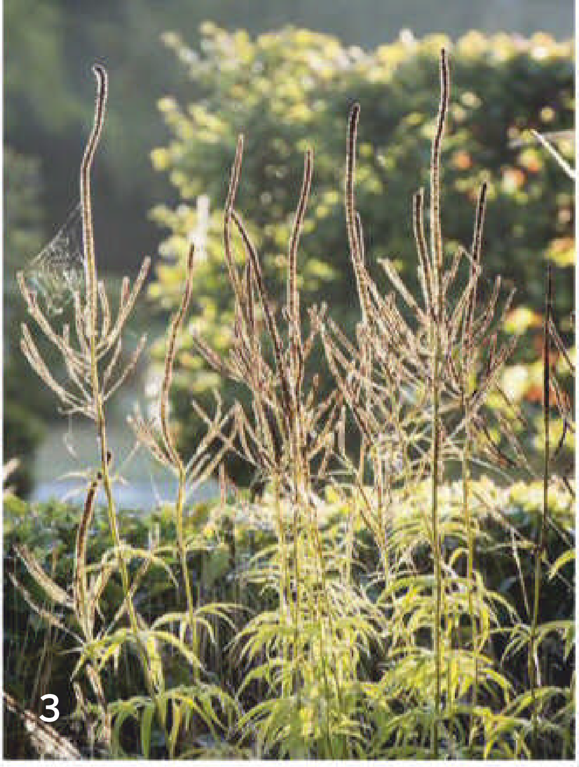
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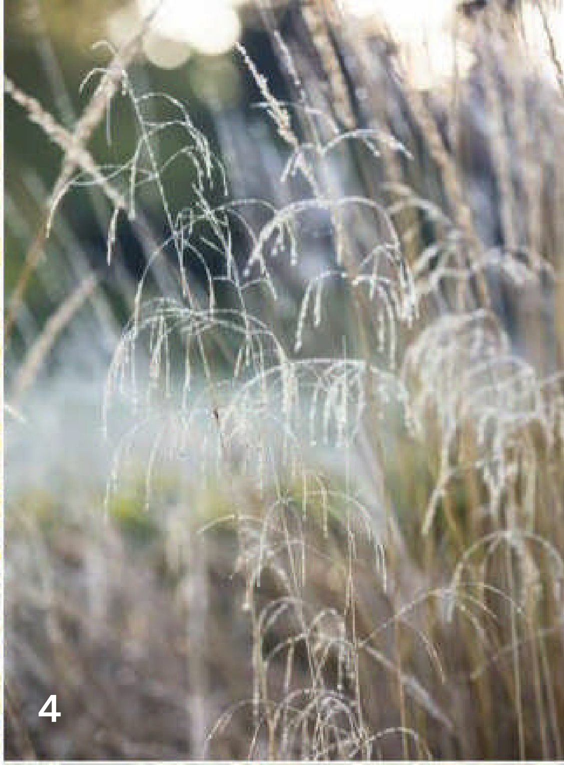
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12 KEY PLANTS

1 *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster' An architectural deciduous grass with strong, vertical flower stems bearing feathery, bronze flowers that fade to an attractive straw colour in the autumn. 1.5m. AGM*. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b†.

2 *Helenium* 'Moerheim Beauty' Rich, red-brown, daisy-shaped flowers that fade to burnt orange with brown centres; the stiffly upright stems carry long, mid-green leaves that form an attractive, upright clump. 75cm. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

3 *Veronicastrum virginicum* 'Lavendelturm' Very slender spires of small, soft-lilac flowers are carried on stiff stems with whorls of long, pointed, mid-green leaves; forms a neat, upright clump. Earlier to flower than other veronicastrums. 2m. AGM. RHS H7.

4 *Deschampsia cespitosa* 'Goldtau' Smaller-growing than some *D. cespitosa* with dark-green leaves ageing to golden brown; long-lasting flower plumes are silvery brown and green, turning warm gold as they mature, giving a shimmering effect. 75cm. AGM. RHS H6.

5 *Hylotelephium* 'Matrona' An upright, deciduous perennial with large, ovate, grey-green leaves tinged purple near the margins, and dense clusters of pale-pink flowers in summer and early autumn; much loved by insects. 60cm. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 3a-9b.

6 *Amsonia hubrichtii* An erect, clump-forming plant that bears terminal panicles of blue flowers in spring, the feathery, lance-shaped leaves are bright green in summer but turn beautifully golden in autumn. 90cm. RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.

7 *Rudbeckia triloba* A short-lived perennial that bears small, daisy-like flowerheads with dark, conical centres and broad, reflexed yellow petals on wiry stems; the display is long lasting from late summer. 90cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

8 *Sanguisorba* 'Cangshan Cranberry' A tall, herbaceous perennial. Leaves bear oval leaflets with jagged edges; dark, purplish-red, drumstick flowers are carried on wiry, see-through stems from late summer into autumn; dead stems remain a feature in winter. 2m. RHS H7.

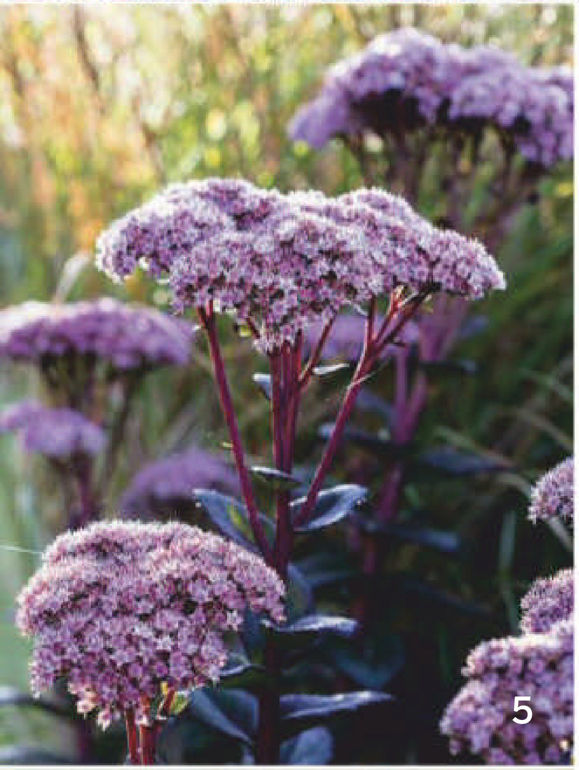
9 *Echinacea purpurea* 'Magnus' Bears large, deep rosy-purple flowers with a prominent orange centre on stiff, upright stems over a long flowering season; the petals are held horizontally rather than drooping like many echinaceas. 90cm. RHS H5, USDA 3a-8b.

10 *Persicaria amplexicaulis* 'Blackfield' A clump-forming perennial with intense, blood-red flower spikes from midsummer to mid-autumn; eye-catching, brilliantly coloured, fluffy flowers open from near-black buds and attract beneficial insects. 80cm. RHS H7.

11 *Laser trilobum* An unusual umbellifer with an aromatic scent. It will grow in shade or partial shade, bearing airy, white umbels with aquilegia-like, glaucous leaves. 1.2m.

12 *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Kleine Silberspinne' Forms a compact clump of arching, narrow leaves with white midribs, and tall, feathery, reddish flowerheads in late summer, soon turning pale brown and lasting well into winter. 1.2m. AGM. RHS H6.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.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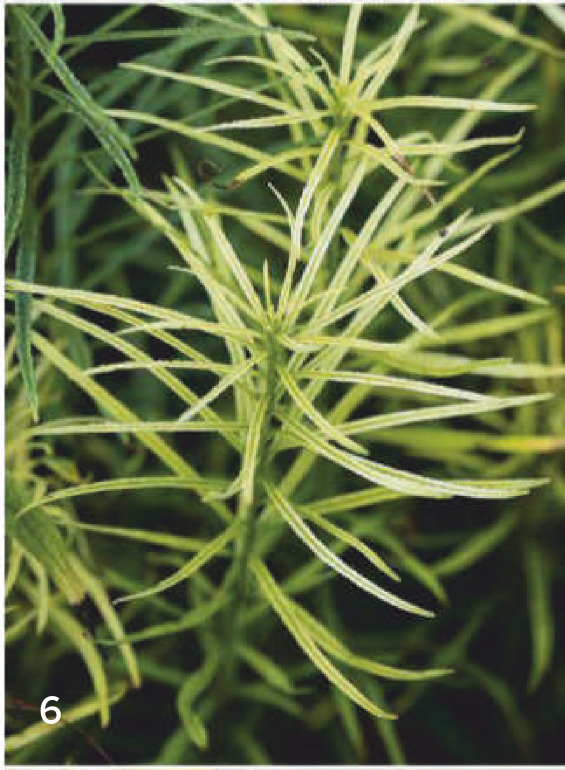
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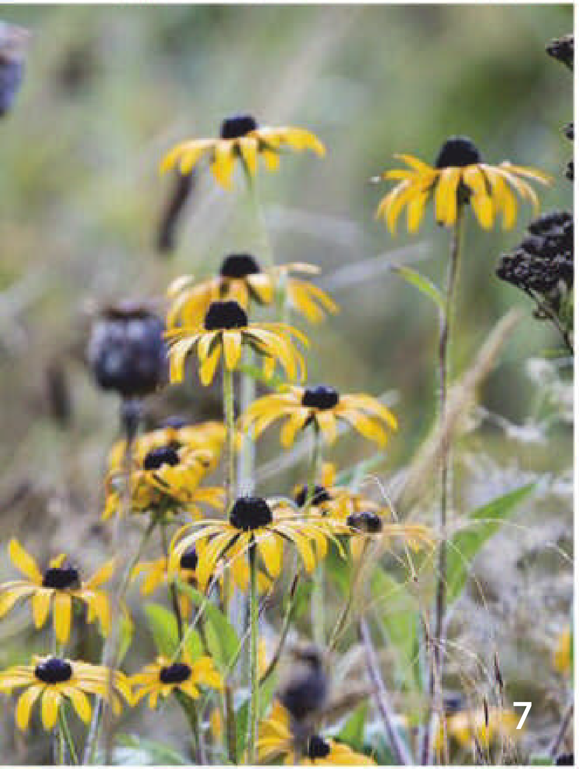
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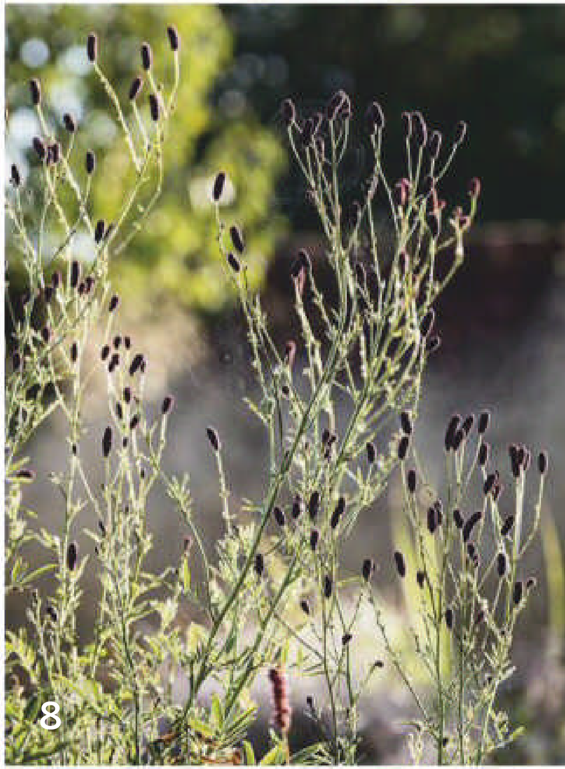
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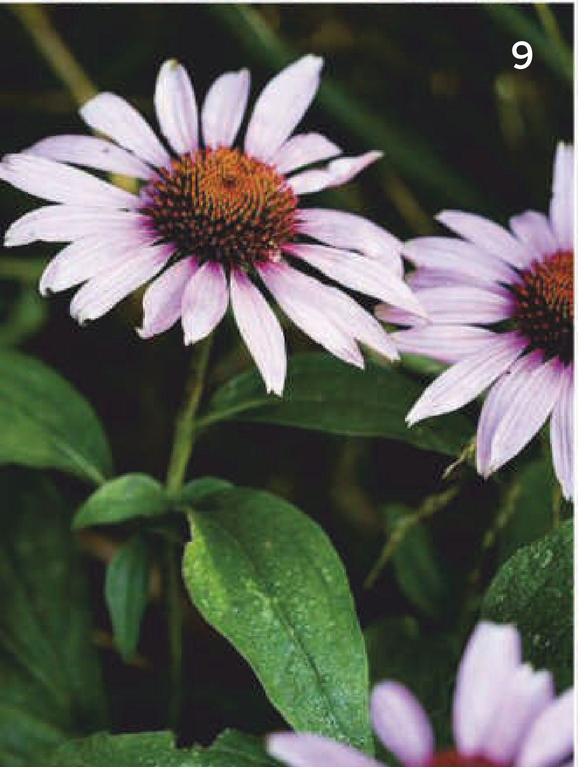
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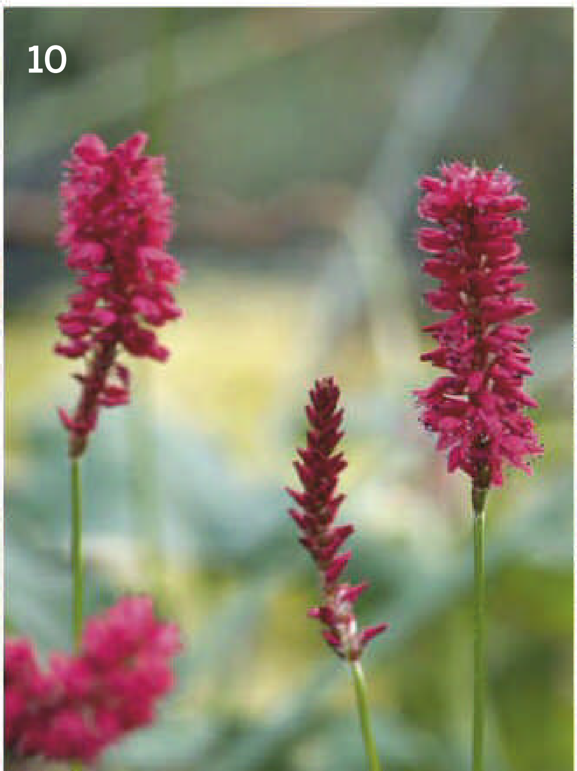
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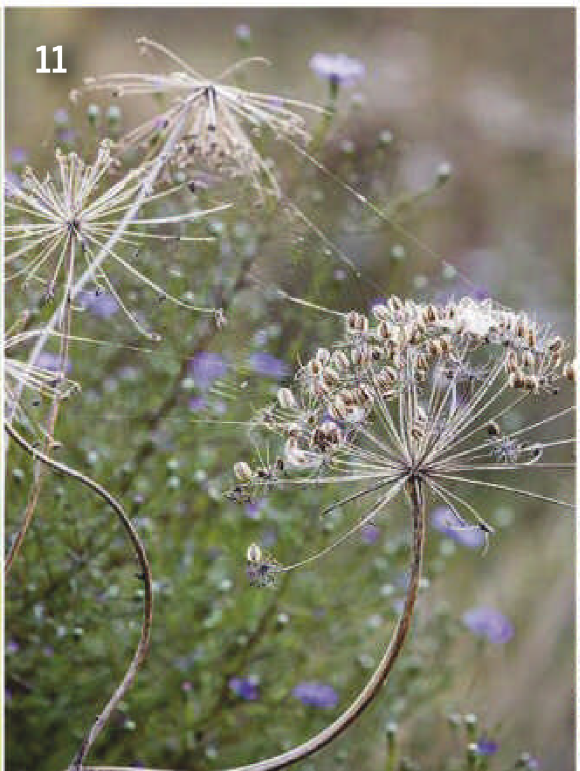
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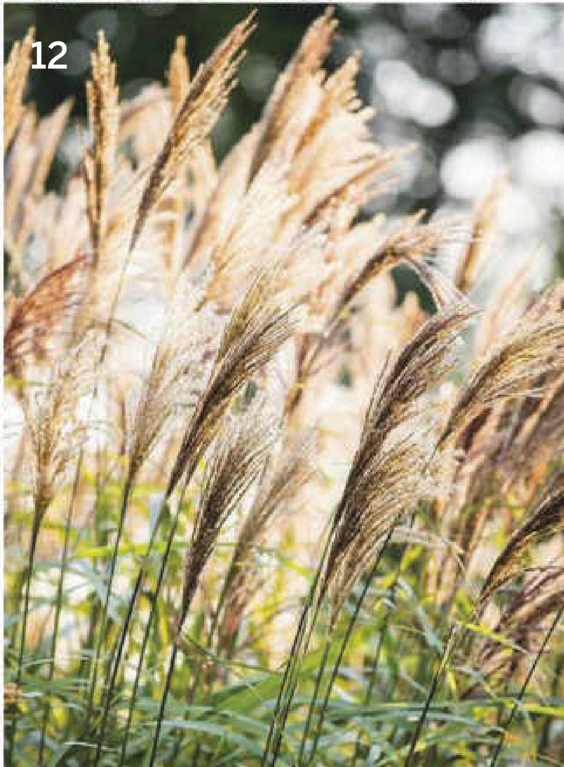
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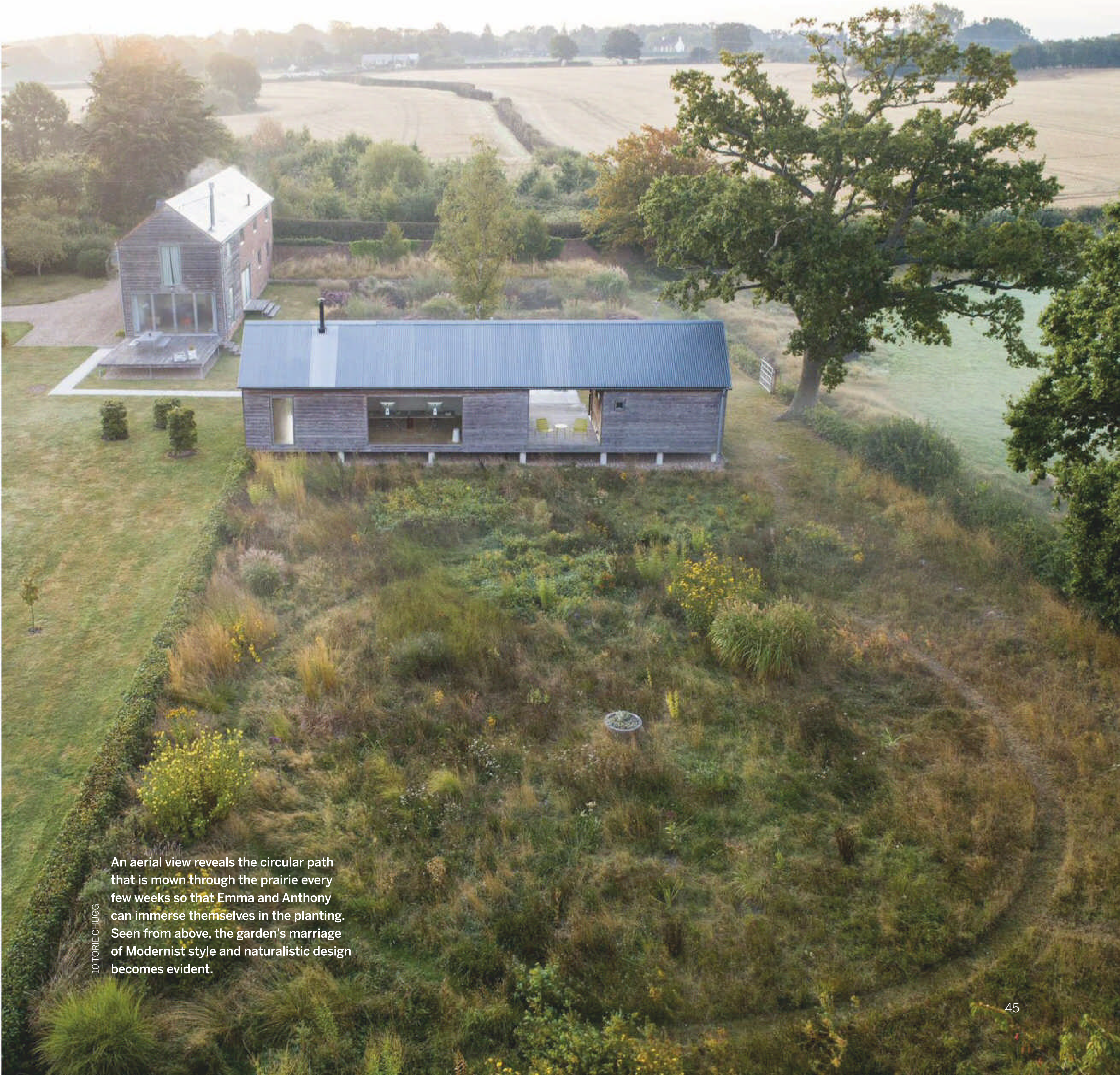
I love the style and ethos of garden designer Mien Ruys. Her use of a Modernist underlay overplanted with wild and loose planting is a constant source of inspiration



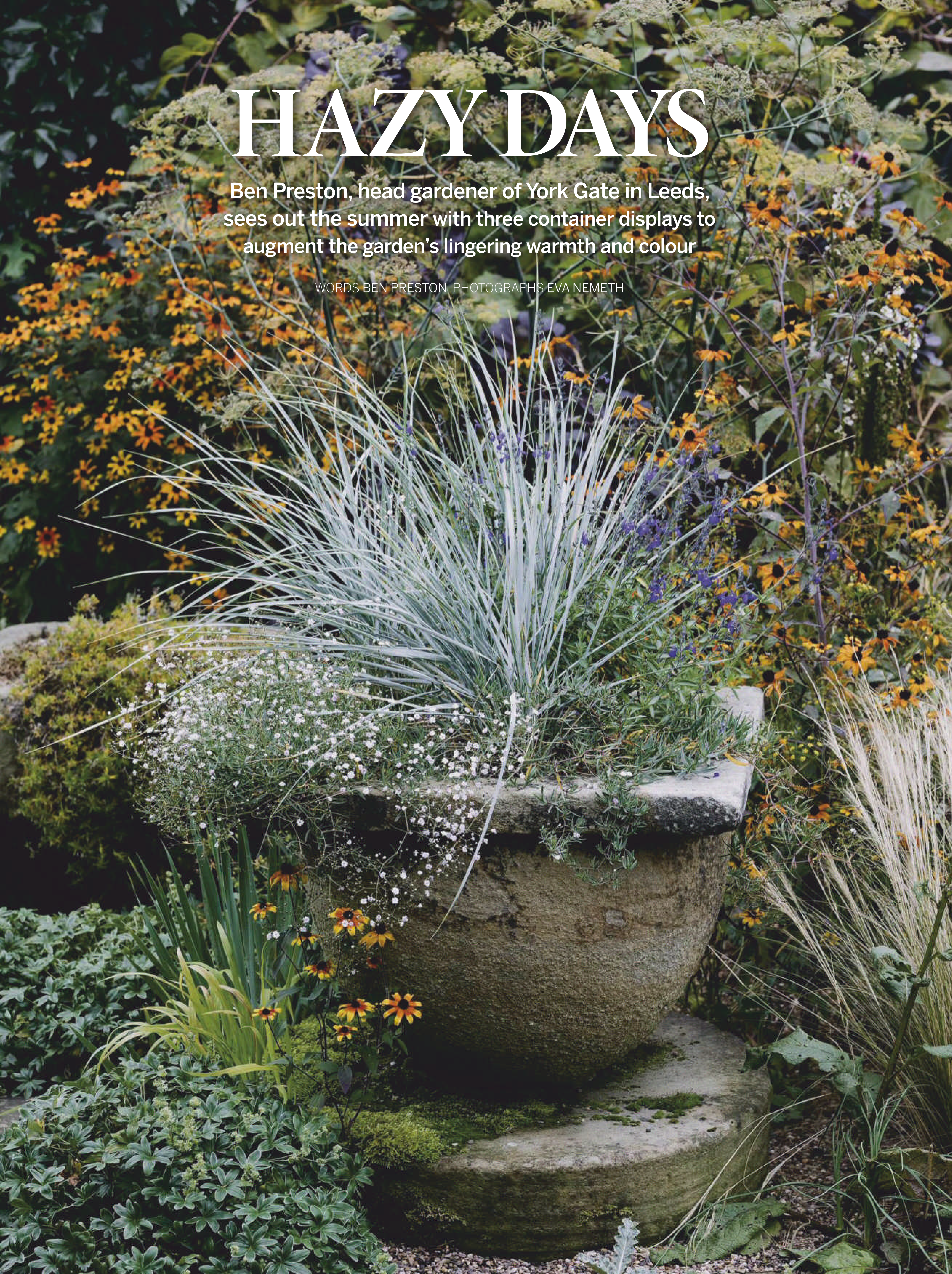
An aerial view reveals the circular path that is mown through the prairie every few weeks so that Emma and Anthony can immerse themselves in the planting. Seen from above, the garden's marriage of Modernist style and naturalistic design becomes evident.

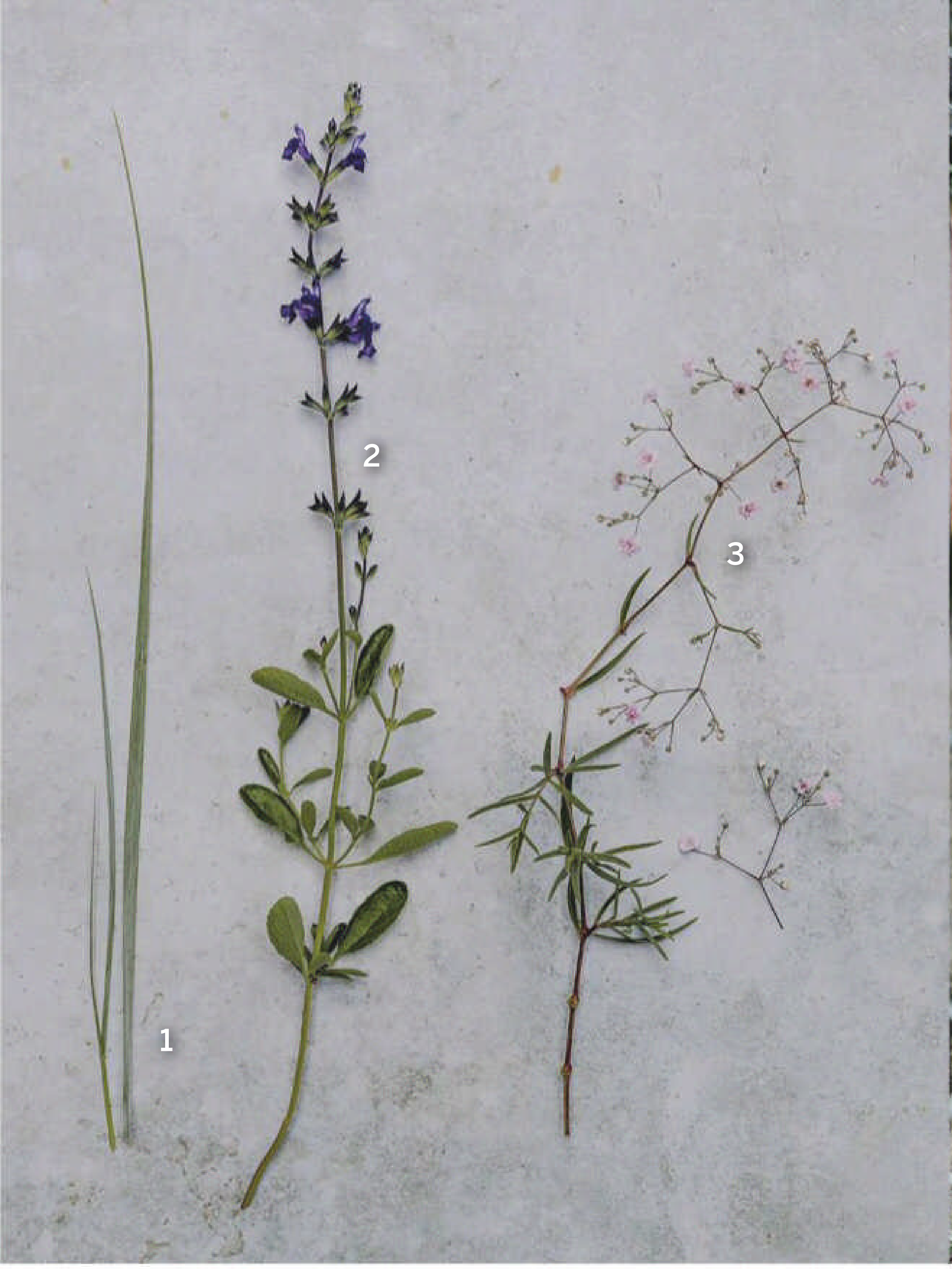
10 TORIE CHUGG

HAZY DAYS

Ben Preston, head gardener of York Gate in Leeds, sees out the summer with three container displays to augment the garden's lingering warmth and colour

WORDS BEN PRESTON PHOTOGRAPHS EVA NEMETH





STEELY BLUE SUMMER

Soft blues and pinks are often far and few between come late summer. This soft and airy composition with the steel-blue *Elymus magellanicus* at its centre provides something a little unseasonal. Cascading, pink baby's breath (*Gypsophila* 'Rosenschleier') and interweaving *Salvia* 'Blue Note' spill from the deep, stone bowl, standing out against the warm colours in the backdrop. A delicate combination.

How to achieve the look

Container and composition
Stone planters are much more permanent than their terracotta counterparts and can add structure to focal points in the garden. This attractive stone bowl, topped with a square rim and placed on an old millstone, is a timeless feature. Filled with crocuses, species tulips and fritillaries in the spring, it is replanted in late May with this delicate combination. The long-flowering *Salvia* 'Blue Note' has aromatic foliage and intense, royal-blue flowers, and as the season progresses it intertwines with the glaucous spears of *Elymus*. The pink, frothy blooms of *Gypsophila* 'Rosenschleier', held on wiry, almost invisible stems, also entwine but cascade informally over the stone edge, softening the stone.

Care and cultivation
You may associate *Elymus* with the pernicious couch grass (*Elymus repens*), a thug in many of our gardens but the steel-blue *Elymus magellanicus* is a well-behaved, clump-forming species with very attractive foliage that performs well in containers and borders. I treat many of the perennials I incorporate into pot design like bonsai. In the autumn when it is time to replace planters with spring bulbs, I remove the summer perennials, teasing and trimming the roots to reduce them in size so they can be potted in a 1.5-litre plastic pot. They can then be stored over winter with relatively little care and replanted again the following summer. It may not appear in the rule books, but it works for me.

Plants

1 *Elymus magellanicus*
A slow-spreading, clump-forming grass with superb, semi-evergreen, silvery blue foliage. Full sun, free-draining soil. 60cm. RHS H6†.

2 *Salvia* 'Blue Note'
A delicate, aromatic salvia, flowering from May to November. Drought-tolerant, thriving in a hot position. I treat it as a tender perennnial. Full sun. 75cm. RHS H4.

3 *Gypsophila* 'Rosenschleier'
A delicate, airy baby's breath with a procumbent habit. Masses of tiny, semi-double, white-flushed, pink flowers that cascade if planted in a rockery or on a wall edge. Full sun. 30cm. AGM*. RHS H5.

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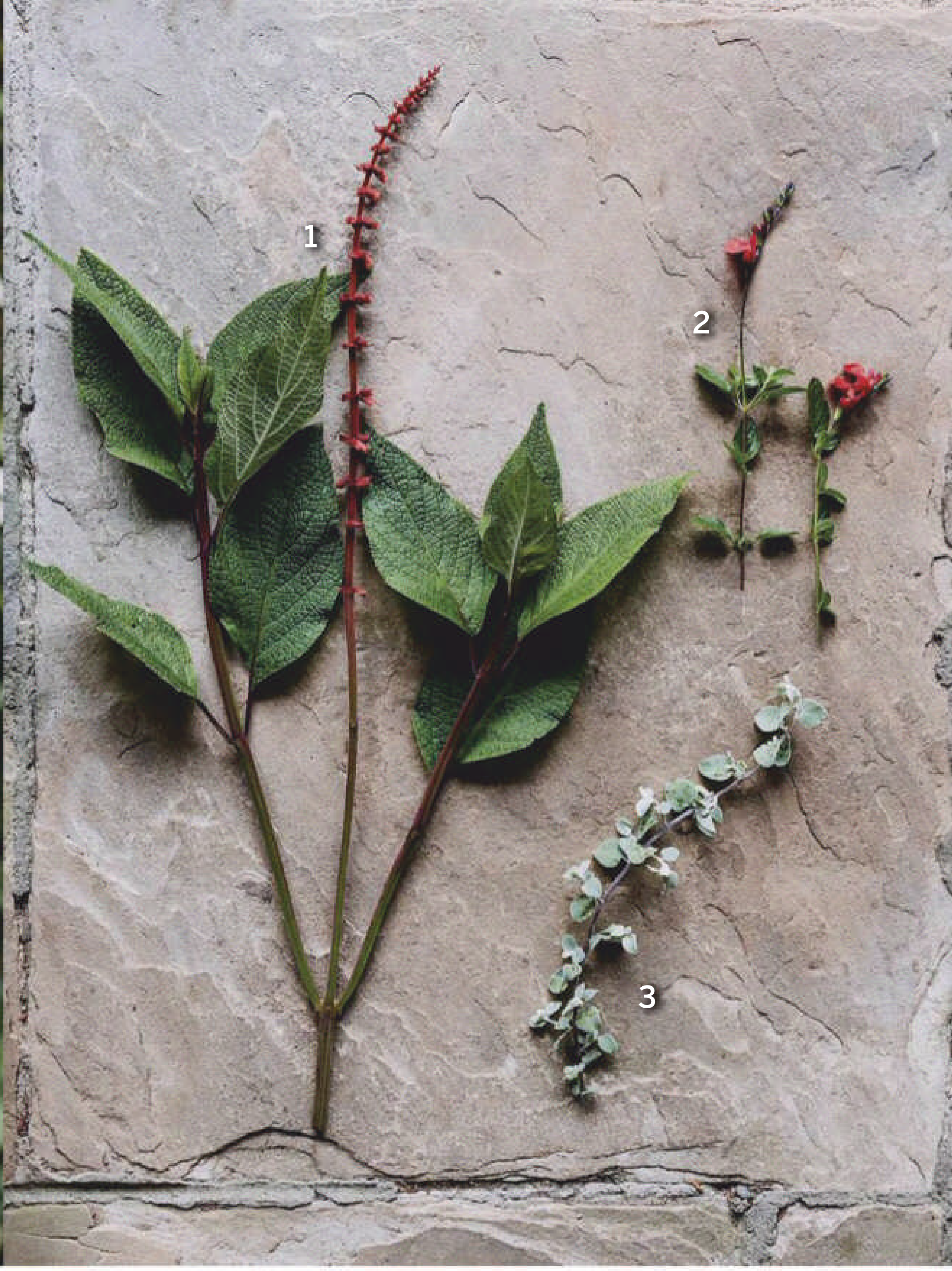
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.



SALVIA OBSESSION

Here I combine two quite beautiful but entirely different, red-flowered sages to show off this fascinating group of plants. From the rising presence of *Salvia confertiflora* to the shorter and prolific-flowering *Salvia* 'Royal Bumble', the variety of habit and flower colour in this genus is vast, with many flowering for months on end. The soft, silvery foliage of *Helichrysum petiolare* provides a canvas both to show off and to contrast with the dark stems and intense blooms above.

How to achieve the look

Container and composition
The architectural centrepiece, *Salvia confertiflora,* makes quite the statement. An unusual species bearing impressive, upright, flowering stems, with furry, red flowers and calyx to match, along with large, corrugated leaves. In the understorey, the smaller but equally impressive *Salvia* 'Royal Bumble' will produce intense red blooms all summer, starting in May and continuing to November. To tie the display together, the scrambling, silvery *Helichrysum petiolare* entwines beautifully with the smaller salvia to cover the lower naked stems. The deep, rectangular stone trough is covered in interesting lichens that will be prominent in early summer before being engulfed as the year progresses.

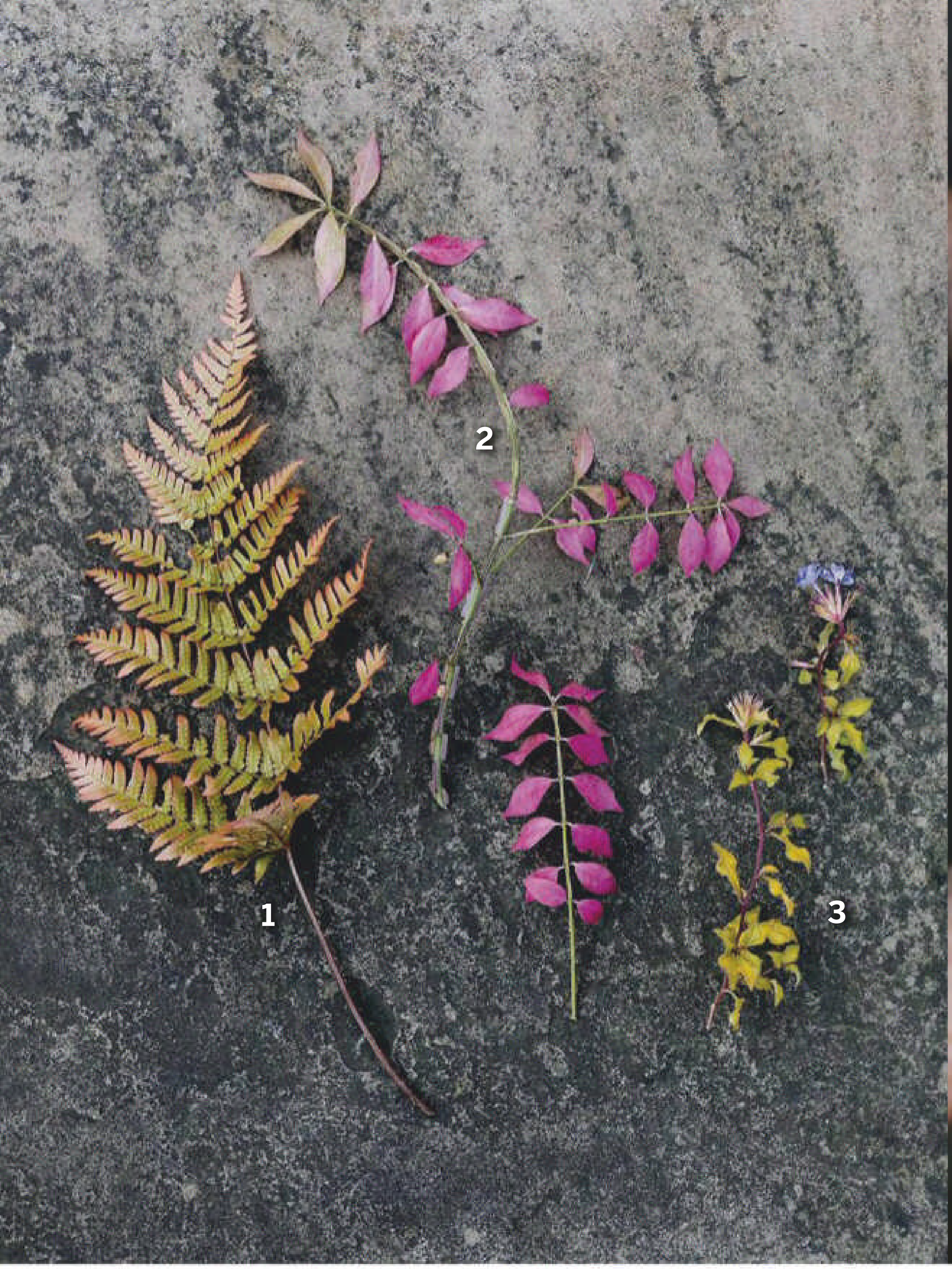
Care and cultivation
Salvias are very quick growing and produce a strong root system, so a regular feeding and watering schedule is necessary to maximise their potential. Compost only has a finite amount of nutrients, so we feed all our pots. I use a liquid organic seaweed-based plant feed once a week. All my tender salvias are overwintered in a greenhouse, keeping just a couple of stock plants of each species or cultivar to maximise the use of space. It is incredibly easy to take cuttings from salvias. I prefer doing this in early spring. Stock plants will flush with new growth early in the year under the warmth of the greenhouse and numerous soft-wood cuttings can be taken from every plant.

Plants

1 ***Salvia confertiflora***
Tall, architectural species salvia from Brazil. Tender perennial. 1.2m. RHS H2.

2 ***Salvia*** **'Royal Bumble'**
A shrubby bush salvia with aromatic foliage and intense, red blooms. This *S. microphylla* cultivar is one of the hardier New World salvias, often proving to be evergreen. 75cm. AGM. RHS H4.

3 ***Helichrysum petiolare***
Tender sub-shrub used as an annual. Grown for its soft, velvety, silver foliage. It has a prostrate habit that will climb and trail through other plants. 45cm. AGM. RHS H3, USDA 9a-11b.



BURNING SUMMER'S END

The russet tones of late summer signify the transition into autumn. The rich reds and burnt oranges of senescing foliage give a hearty warmth to the landscapes that surround us. The intense, red leaves of *Euonymus alatus* 'Compactus' is the first shrub in my garden to express the coming of autumn. Coupled with the understorey of *Ceratostigma willmottianum* Sapphire Ring (= 'Lissbrill') and semi-evergreen *Dryopteris erythrosora*, it forms a valuable combination for a shady corner.

How to achieve the look

Container and composition
This earthenware terracotta container complements the russet tones of the planting and completes the late summer and autumnal effect. *Euonymus alatus* 'Compactus' gives interest all year round but comes into its own when the leaves glow burnt pinky-red in mid- to late September. Its winged stems and open habit look good even when the leaves have fallen. The burnt-orange, emerging foliage of *Dryopteris erythrosora* and golden-yellow leaves of *Ceratostigma willmottianum* Sapphire Ring (='Lissbrill') stand out against the brown tones of the pot, lighting up this shady corner. I have underplanted this semi-permanent combination with the showy, February snowdrop *Galanthus* 'S Arnott'.

Care and cultivation
Semi-permanent planters need relatively little care compared with seasonally changed annual displays, but still require some thought. I replant this pot every two to three years to renew the exhausted compost. When preparing pots that are not intended to be replanted every year, I use a loam-based John Innes compost rather than a potting compost that will disappear as it degrades. It is also useful to add a slow-release fertiliser, such as 16-18 month Osmocote Exact, which gives a steady and balanced supply of nutrients. Both the *Ceratostigma* and *Dryopteris* require dividing to maintain their vigour and health. This is best done in spring to maintain the desired late-summer/autumn display.

Plants

1 *Dryopteris erythrosora*
Attractive, clump-forming, deciduous fern. Prefers moist, humus-rich soil and partial shade. 75cm. AGM. RHS H4, USDA 5a-8b.

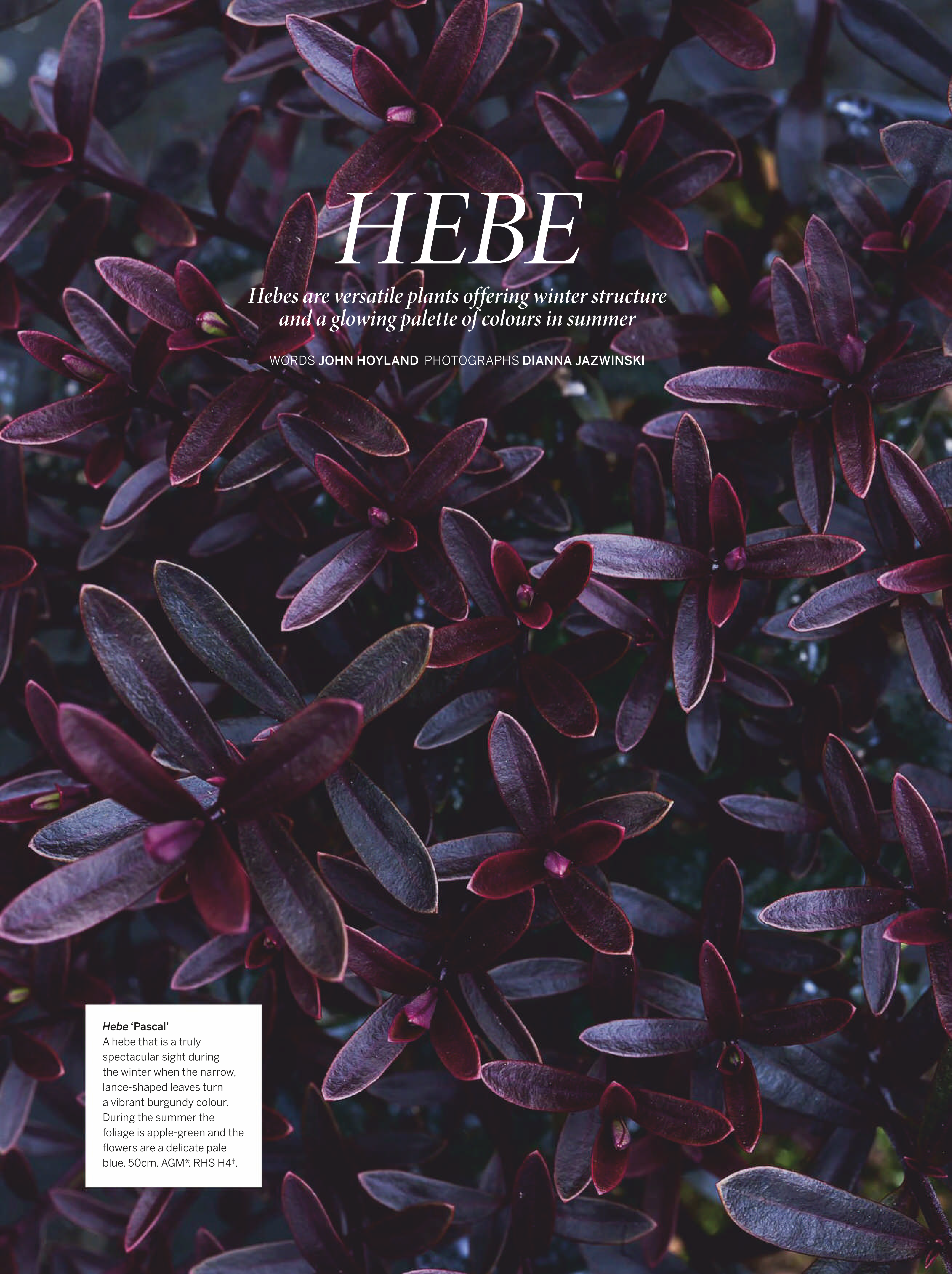
2 *Euonymus alatus* 'Compactus'
A medium-sized shrub suitable for a small garden or pot. One of the first shrubs to enter into autumn. 1.2m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

3 *Ceratostigma willmottianum* Sapphire Ring (= 'Lissbrill')
Compact, prostrate shrub that makes good groundcover. Can be cut hard back every spring. Striking, golden foliage and sky-blue flowers from August to September. Full sun or partial shade. 80cm. RHS H5.

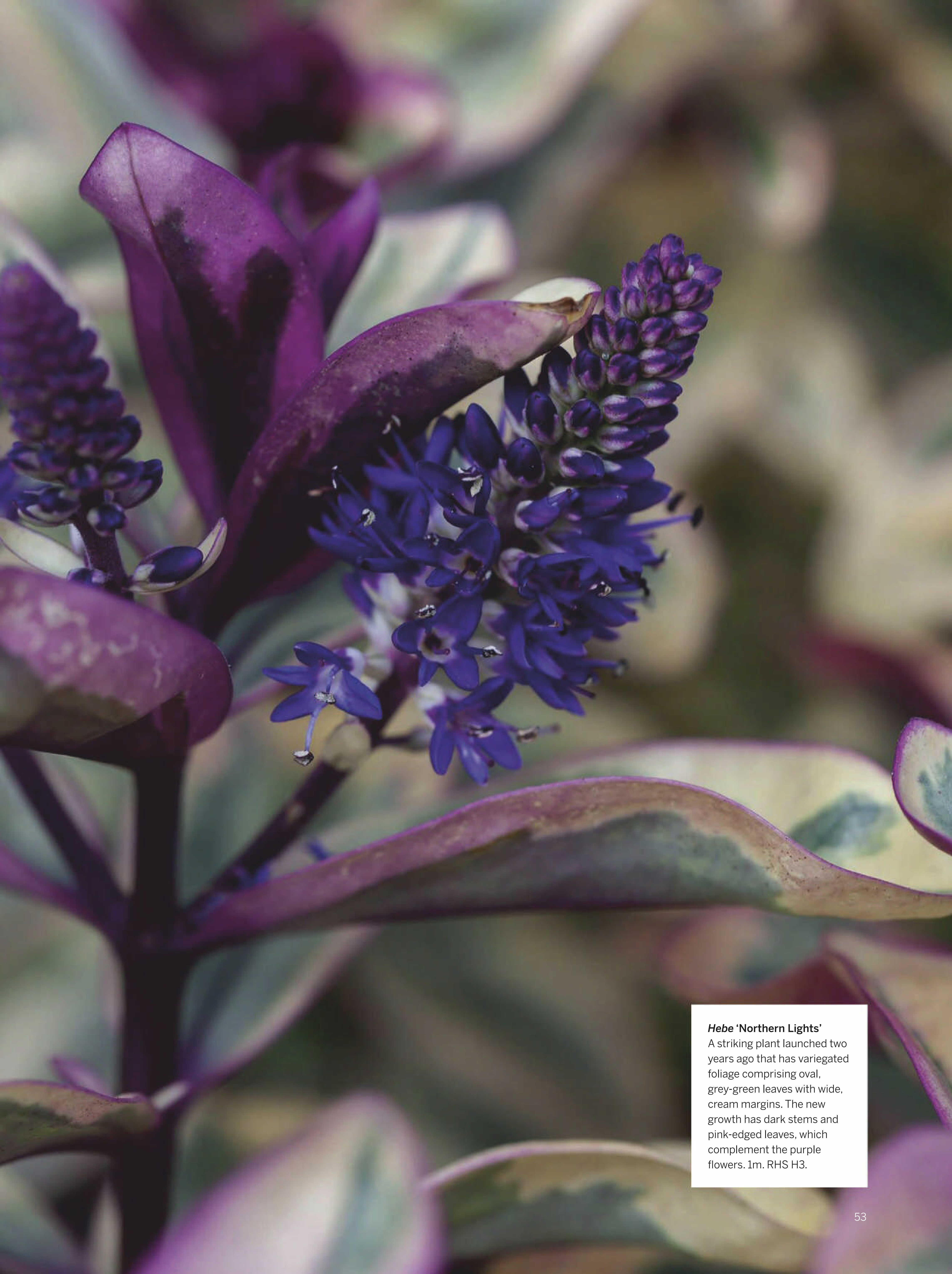
HEBE

Hebes are versatile plants offering winter structure and a glowing palette of colours in summer

WORDS **JOHN HOYLAND** PHOTOGRAPHS **DIANNA JAZWINSKI**



Hebe **'Pascal'**
A hebe that is a truly spectacular sight during the winter when the narrow, lance-shaped leaves turn a vibrant burgundy colour. During the summer the foliage is apple-green and the flowers are a delicate pale blue. 50cm. AGM*. RHS H4[†].



***Hebe* 'Northern Lights'**
A striking plant launched two years ago that has variegated foliage comprising oval, grey-green leaves with wide, cream margins. The new growth has dark stems and pink-edged leaves, which complement the purple flowers. 1m. RHS H3.

On paper, hebes have a lot going for them – they are long flowering, easy to grow, and evergreen. Nevertheless, despite their many qualities, they are not in fashion. Why this should be is rather puzzling; surely they deserve more recognition.

Part of the reason might be that some designers have not yet found a place for neat domes of hebes in the naturalistic froth of perennials and grasses that currently dominates their work. Moreover, they have a reputation for being short-lived. There are signs, however, that the tide is starting to turn in their favour as dynamic breeders are starting to produce new cultivars, often with notable foliage.

Hebes are the largest plant genus of New Zealand, where about 90 species are found. There the plant has evolved to include both tiny shrubs and species that are six metres tall and have adapted to grow in harsh alpine situations, on the edges of forests and in coastal environments. This range of habitats of the parent plants means that breeders have been able to produce garden hybrids that can cope with many soil types and situations. Their ability to stand up to strong winds and salt spray has made them a particularly good choice for seaside gardens, particularly in southwest Scotland, Devon and Cornwall, where the Gulf Stream brings strong, salt-laden winds and high rainfall along with its benign warmth.

In the wild, leaf colour and size varies, with the smaller-leaved species found at higher altitudes, being therefore hardier. This diversity has been exploited by plant breeders to produce hybrids with variegated leaves, with silvery-grey leaves and with leaves that have purple or red tones. Recently, some breeders have focused on extending the range of foliage colours, producing plants with leaves that change colour with the season, often taking on dark tones during the winter months. In general, hybrids with large leaves are more tender than those with small leaves, and thus require protection.

Species flowers are usually white with some pale blues but garden hybrids have been developed with flowers that also encompass a range of pinks, purples and dark blues. All hebes tend to be floriferous and long-flowering from midsummer through to autumn, producing flowers when most other shrubs have stopped doing so. The flowers are packed with nectar, making hebes one of the best shrubs for attracting bees and butterflies.

One weak point of hebes is that even the hardiest of them are relatively short-lived, with most surviving for about a decade. Unlike many shrubs, hebes do not regrow after being cut back so they cannot be rejuvenated by hard pruning. The first signs of ageing are stems turning brown and dying and the shrub falling open and looking increasingly thin. When this happens, the solution is to thank the plant for its service, dig it out and replace it.

Most hebes form hummocks that can, with a little imagination, be used in many garden settings. Some can be clipped into neat domes that are at ease among the clean lines of contemporary gardens. I have seen the solidity of groups of dwarf hebes looking wonderful as a background to clouds of *Sporobolus heterolepis*. It is a combination that would work well with other grasses and airy perennials. Low hedges of hebe are often used as a windbreak in exposed coastal gardens and the same planting could be used to protect and enclose herbaceous plantings in inland gardens. Some of the newer introductions have been specifically bred for pots and containers and for small, urban gardens. It remains to be seen whether hebes become sought after but a plant that is so versatile and so beautiful should nevertheless be seriously considered in any garden. ❑

• Author John Hoyland is a plantsman and garden writer. His recommendations for the best hebes can be found over the next five pages.

PLANT PROFILE

What A genus of about 90 species of evergreen, long-flowering shrubs, some with coloured foliage that tend to form dense hummocks. Hebes were originally classified as species of *Veronica*, and more recent analysis has shown them to indeed be part of the *Veronica* genus where they may soon be moved back.

Origins Most hebes originate in New Zealand with a few species scattered around the southern hemisphere.

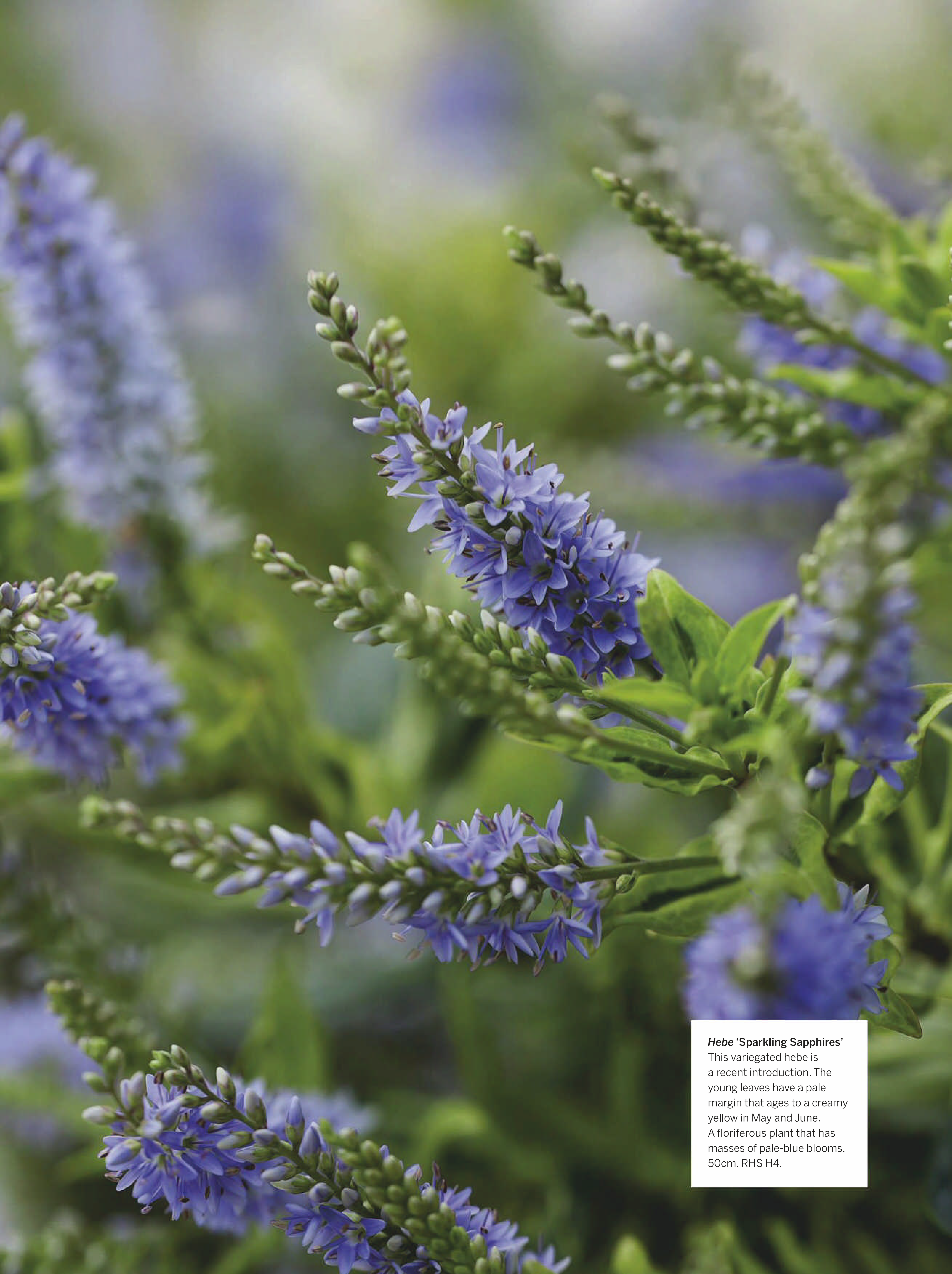
Season The flowering period is from midsummer to mid autumn, with most flowering between June and September.

Size 40cm to 1.5m.

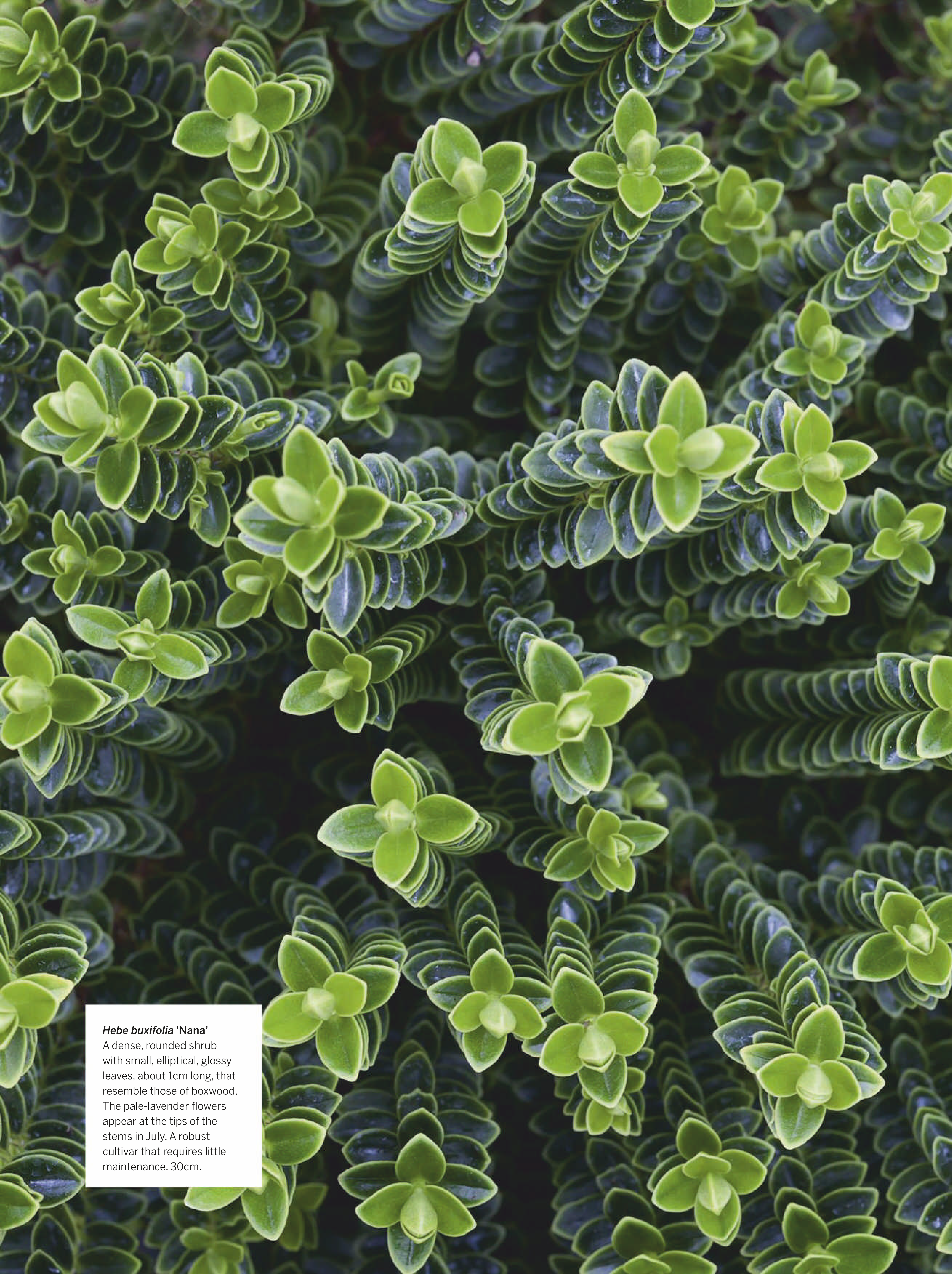
Conditions Most hebes prefer poor, well-drained soil. They will withstand high winds and salt spray.

Hardiness Although some hebes are hardy, others can suffer from frost damage to new shoots. Most have a hardiness rating of RHS H3 or RHS H4 and are suitable for gardens in USDA zones 8a to 10b.

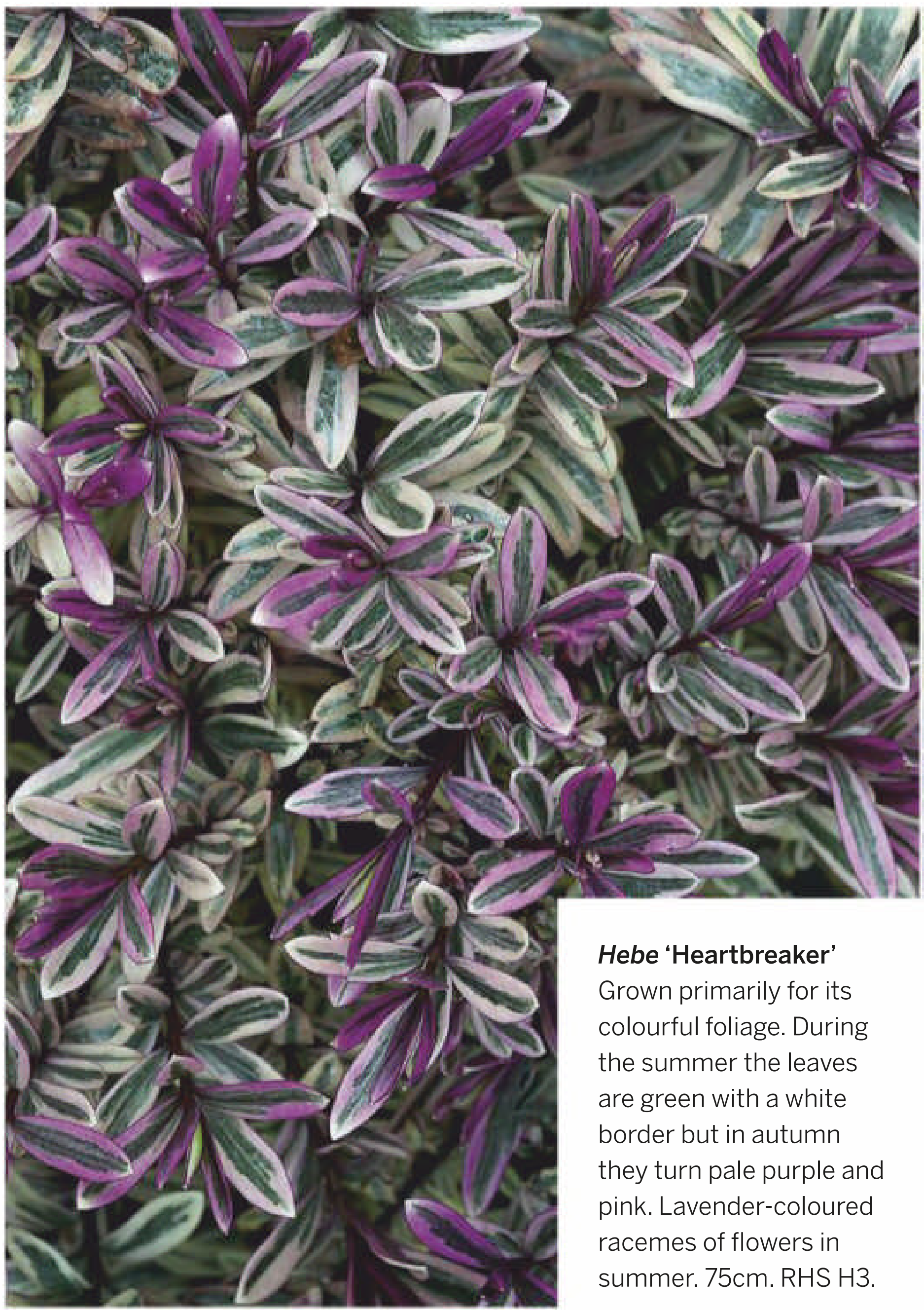
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.



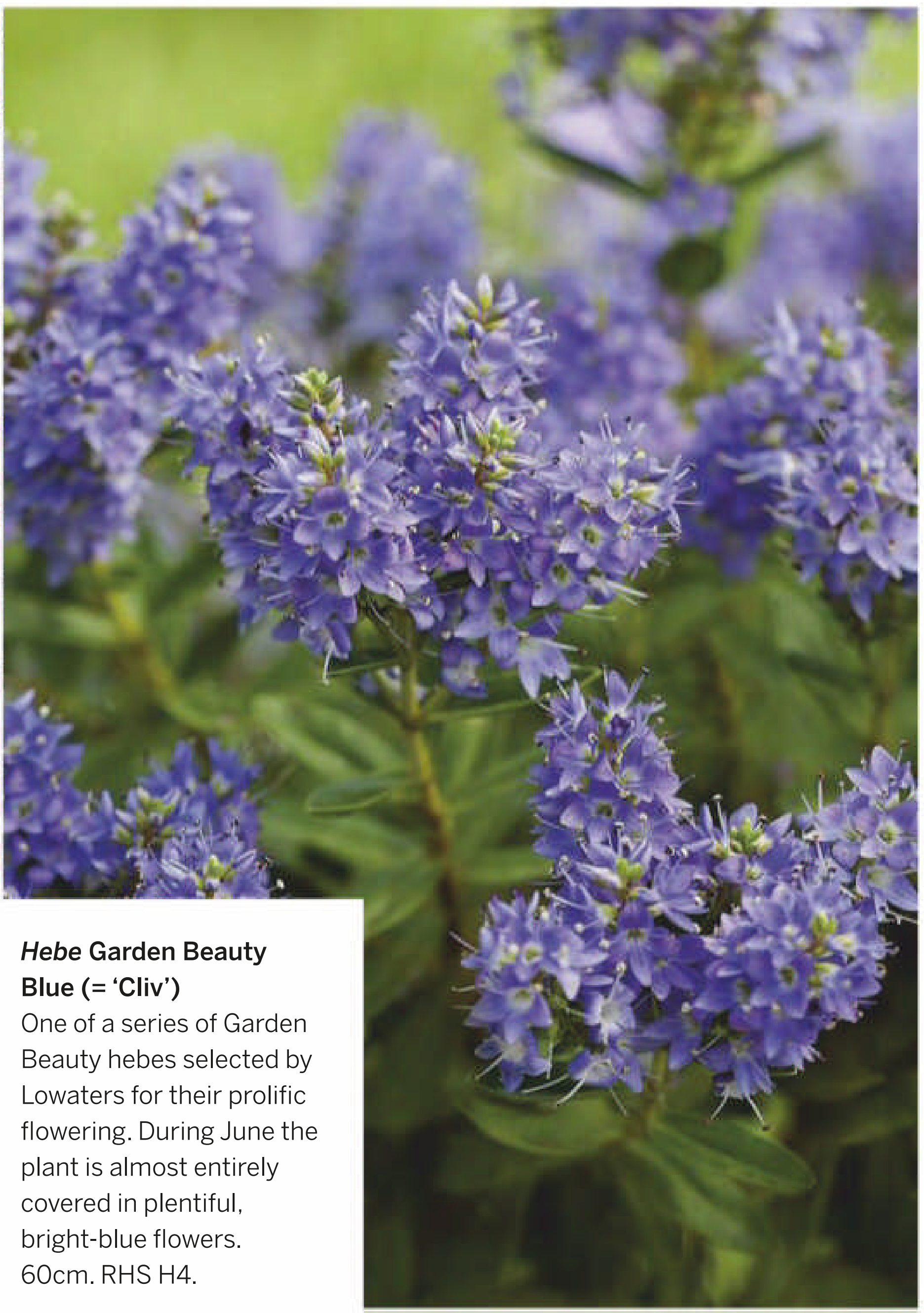
Hebe **'Sparkling Sapphires'**
This variegated hebe is a recent introduction. The young leaves have a pale margin that ages to a creamy yellow in May and June. A floriferous plant that has masses of pale-blue blooms. 50cm. RHS H4.



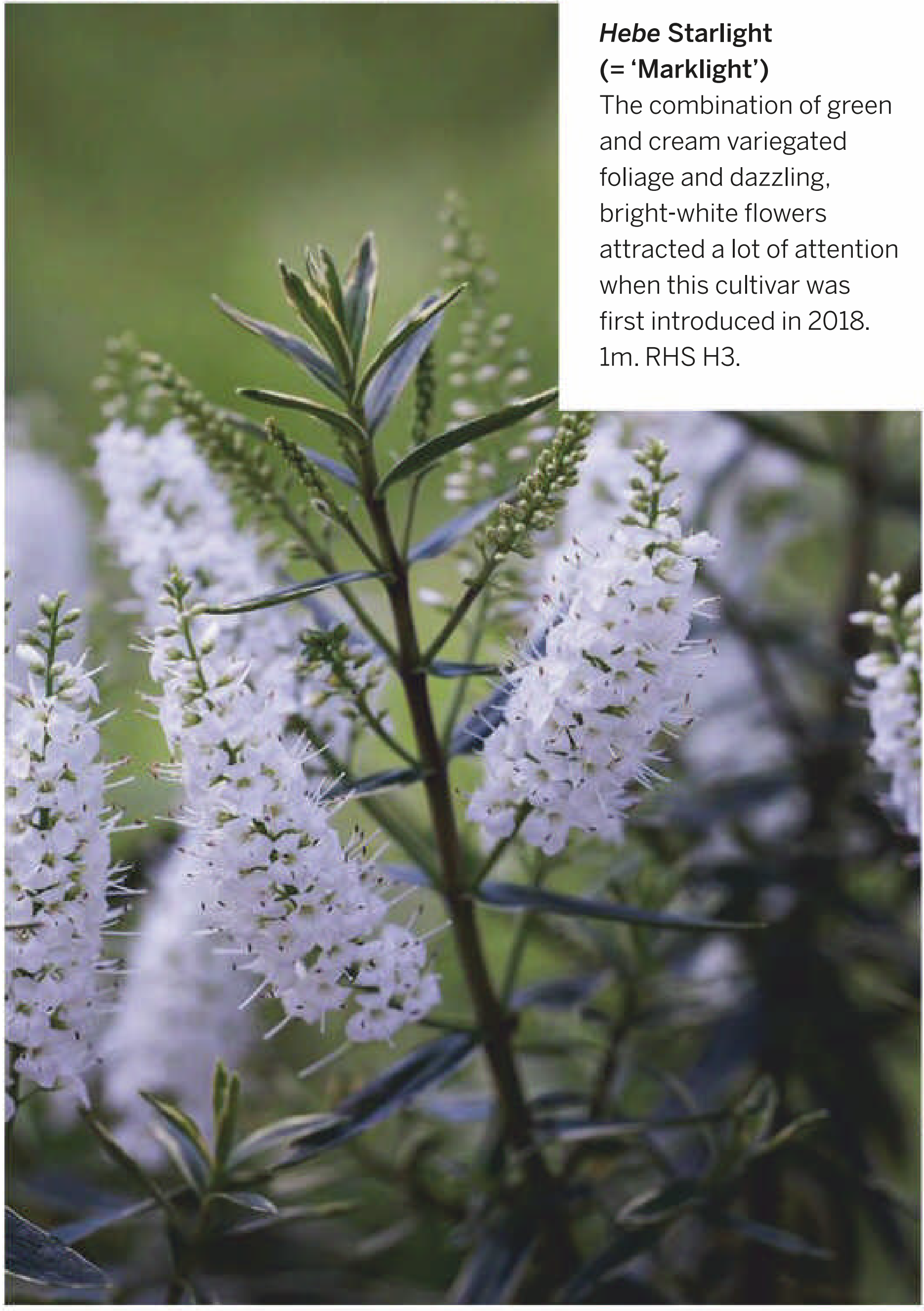
***Hebe buxifolia* 'Nana'**
A dense, rounded shrub with small, elliptical, glossy leaves, about 1cm long, that resemble those of boxwood. The pale-lavender flowers appear at the tips of the stems in July. A robust cultivar that requires little maintenance. 30cm.



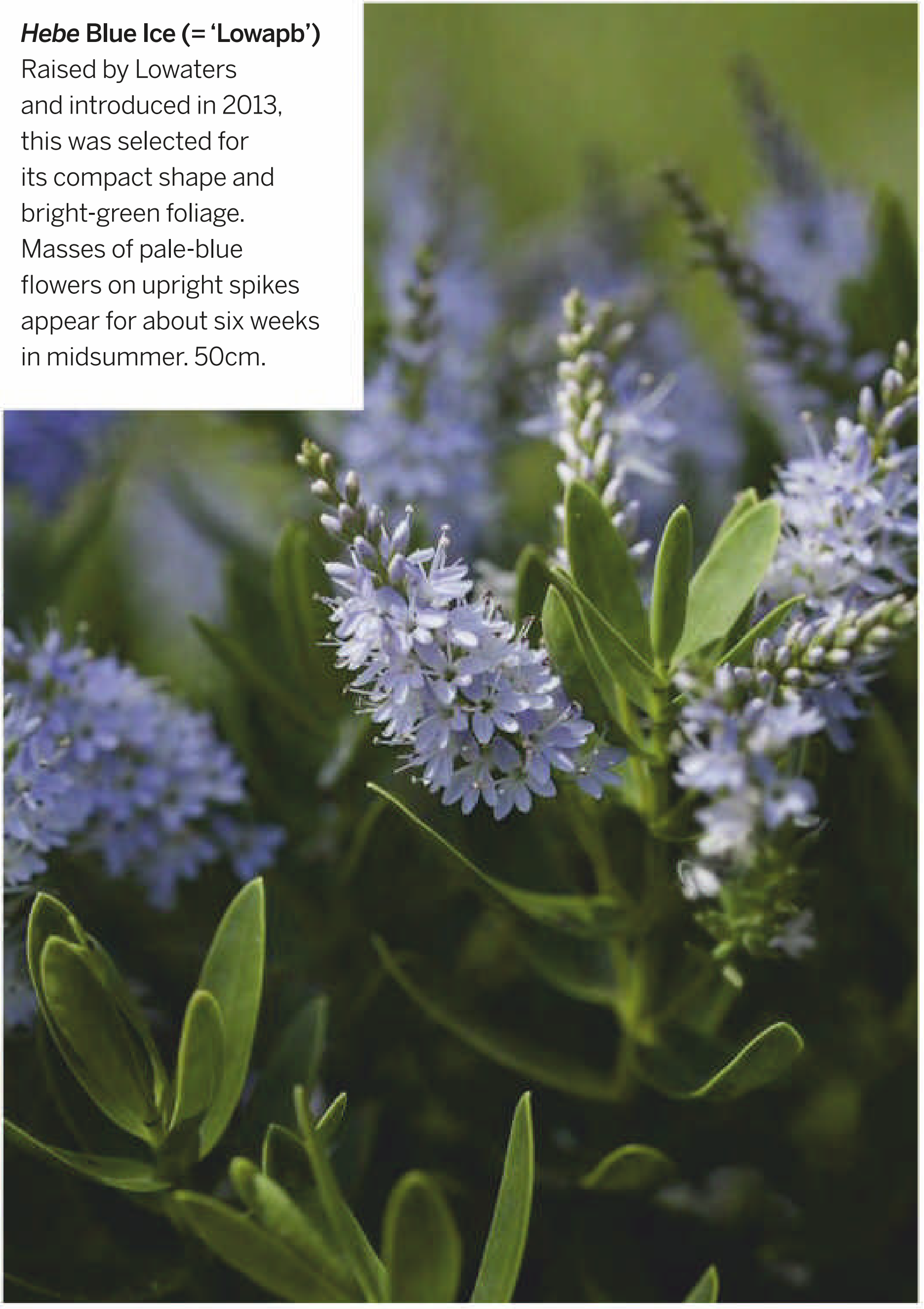
***Hebe* ‘Heartbreaker’**
Grown primarily for its colourful foliage. During the summer the leaves are green with a white border but in autumn they turn pale purple and pink. Lavender-coloured racemes of flowers in summer. 75cm. RHS H3.



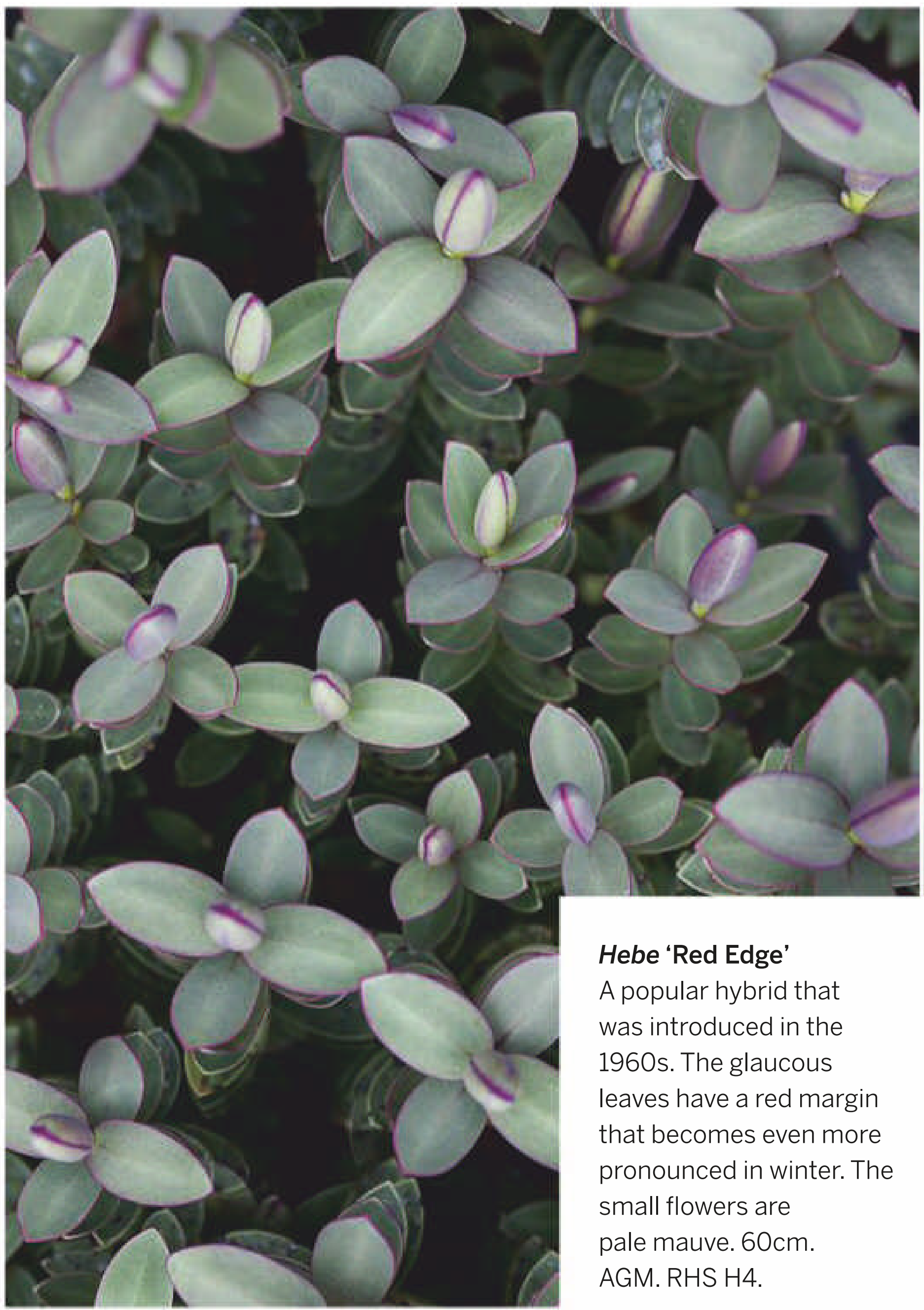
***Hebe* Garden Beauty Blue (= ‘Cliv’)**
One of a series of Garden Beauty hebes selected by Lowaters for their prolific flowering. During June the plant is almost entirely covered in plentiful, bright-blue flowers. 60cm. RHS H4.



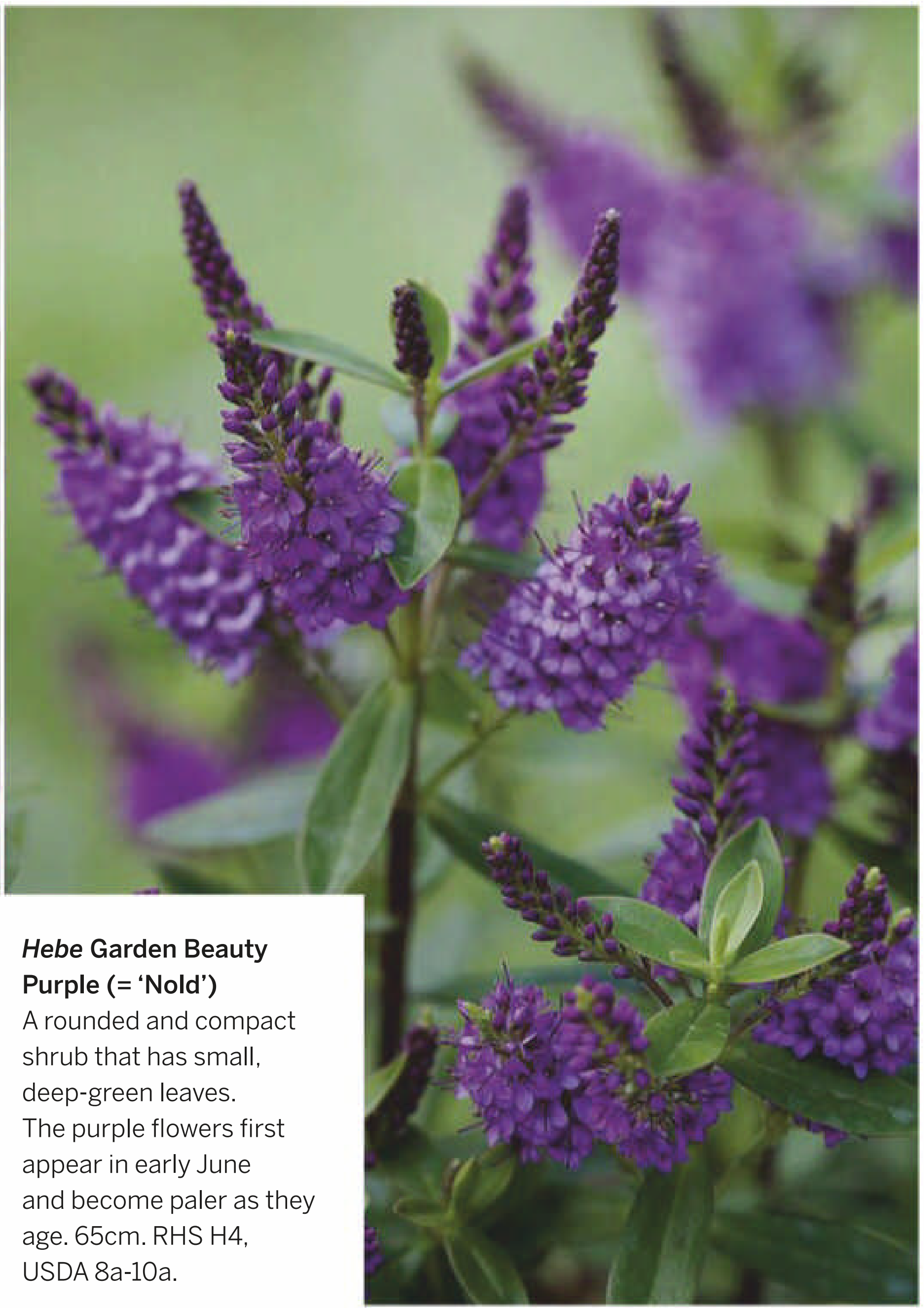
***Hebe* Starlight (= ‘Marklight’)**
The combination of green and cream variegated foliage and dazzling, bright-white flowers attracted a lot of attention when this cultivar was first introduced in 2018. 1m. RHS H3.



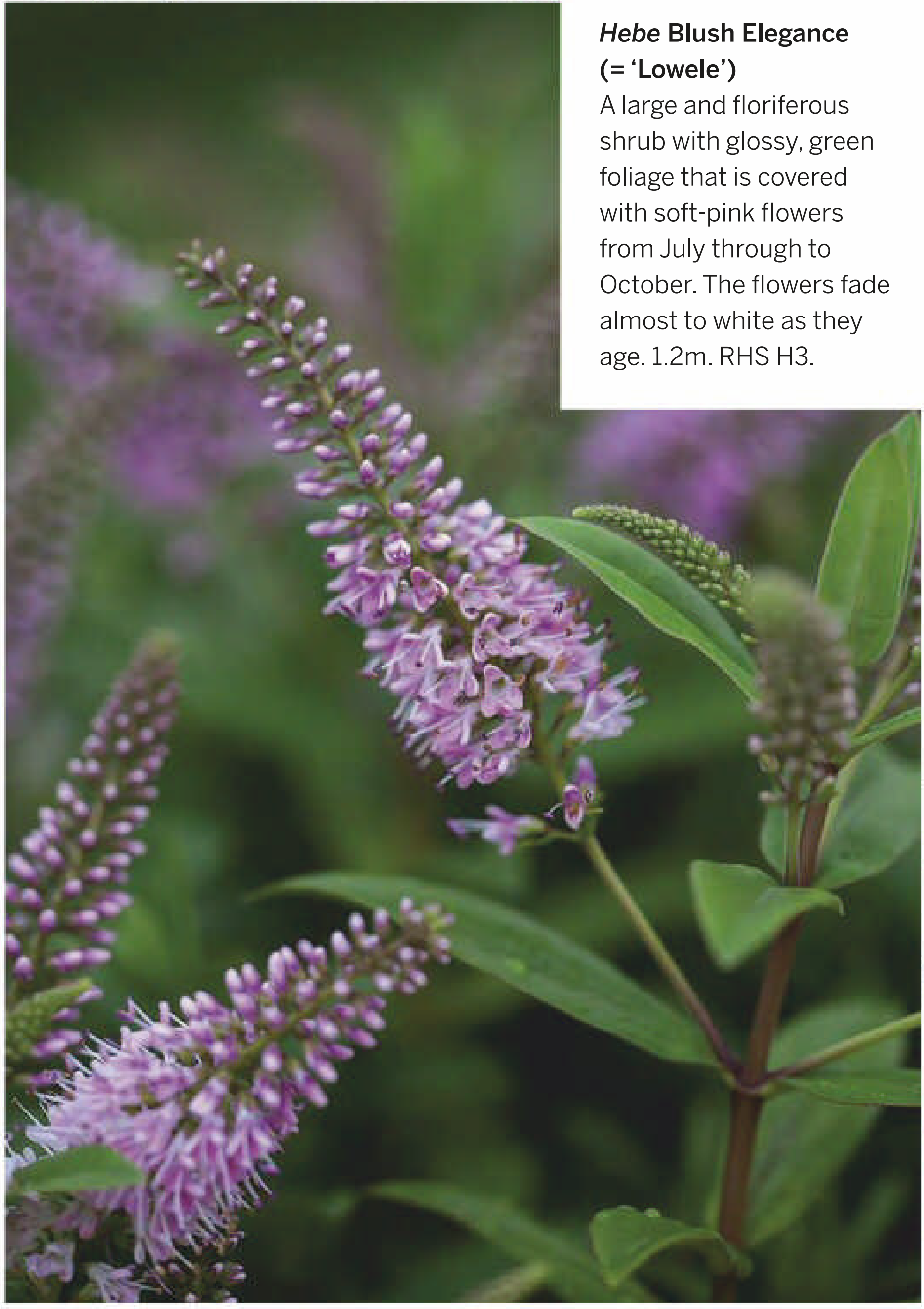
***Hebe* Blue Ice (= ‘Lowapb’)**
Raised by Lowaters and introduced in 2013, this was selected for its compact shape and bright-green foliage. Masses of pale-blue flowers on upright spikes appear for about six weeks in midsummer. 50cm.



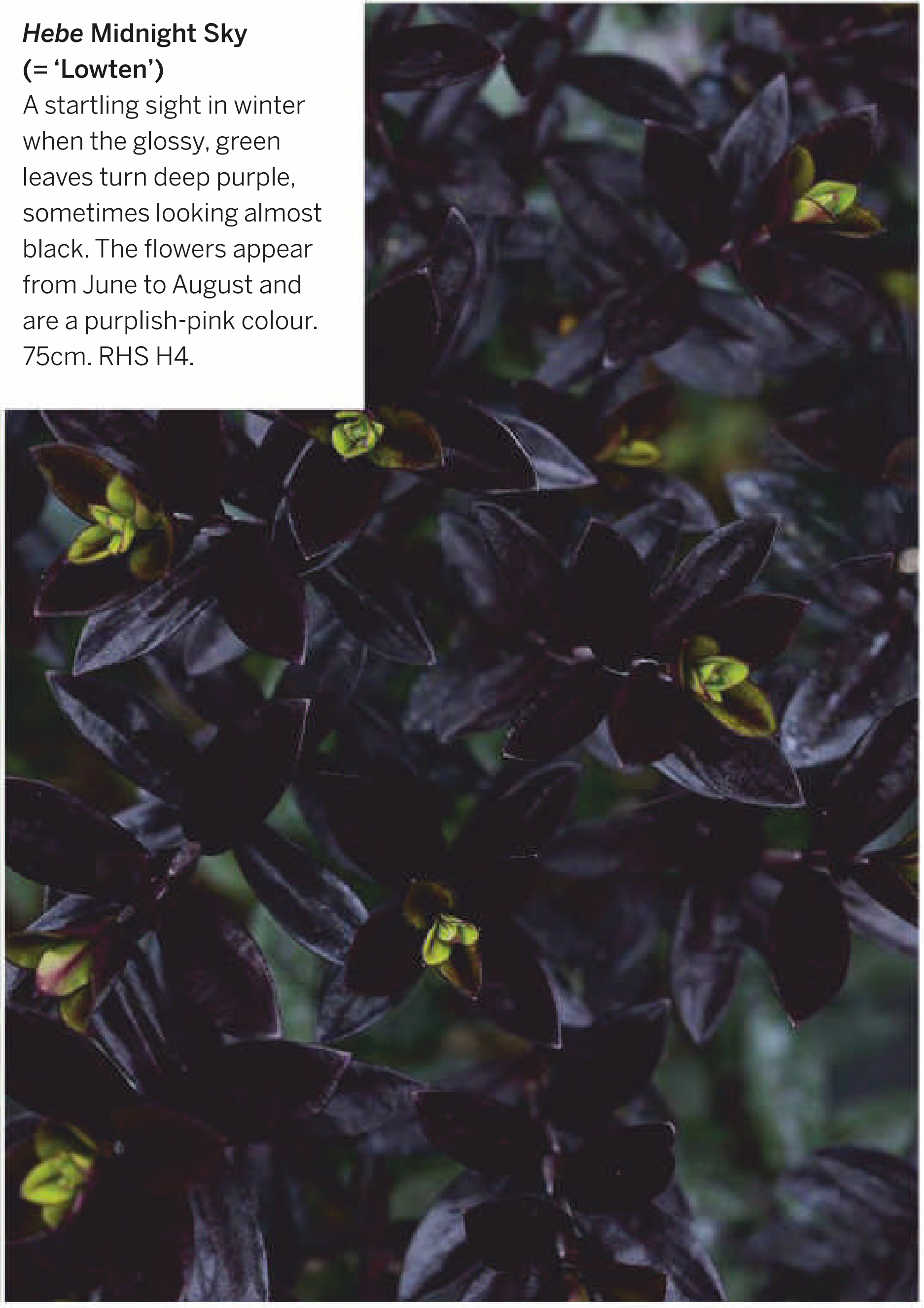
***Hebe* 'Red Edge'**
A popular hybrid that was introduced in the 1960s. The glaucous leaves have a red margin that becomes even more pronounced in winter. The small flowers are pale mauve. 60cm. AGM. RHS H4.



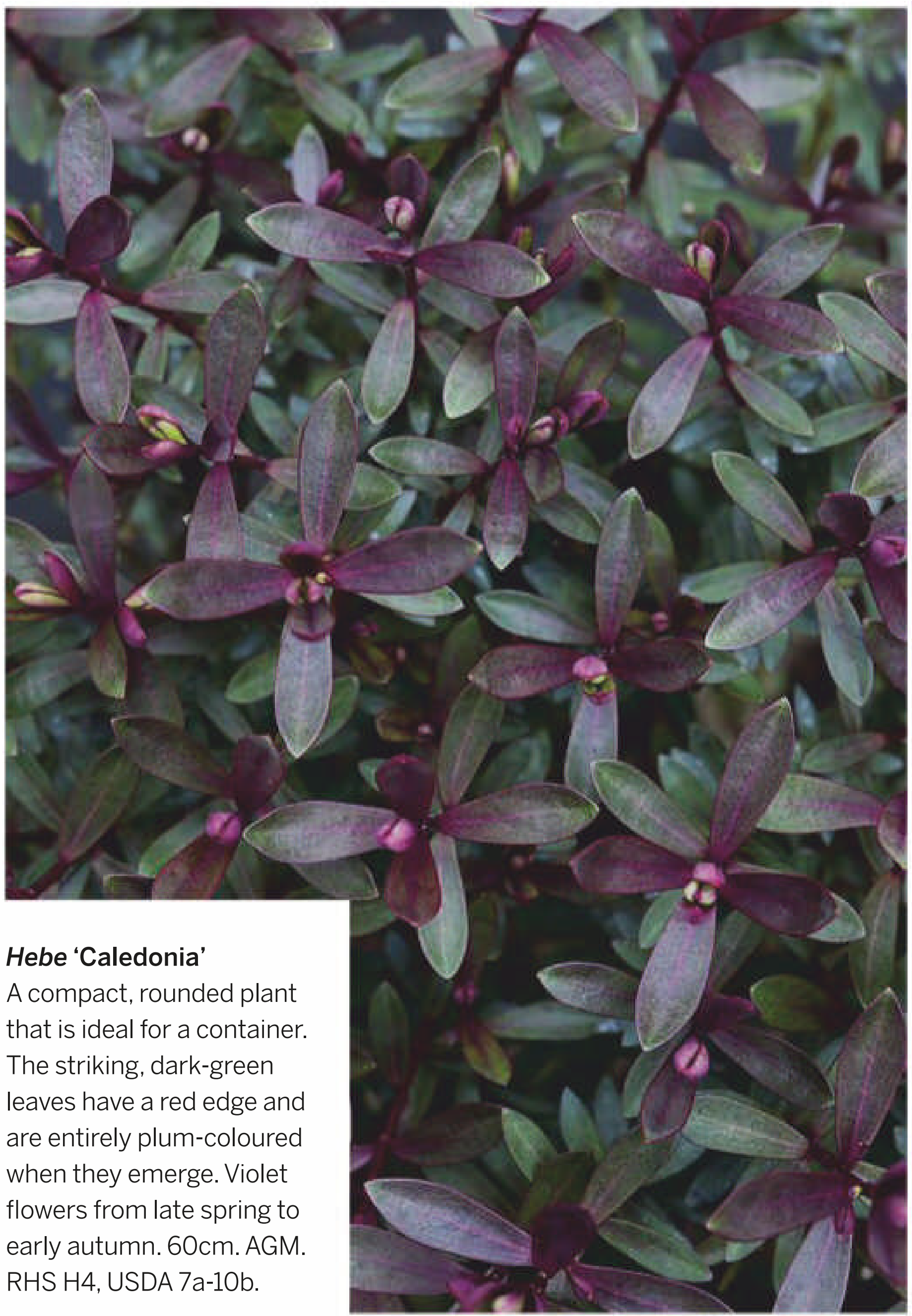
***Hebe* Garden Beauty Purple (= 'Nold')**
A rounded and compact shrub that has small, deep-green leaves. The purple flowers first appear in early June and become paler as they age. 65cm. RHS H4, USDA 8a-10a.



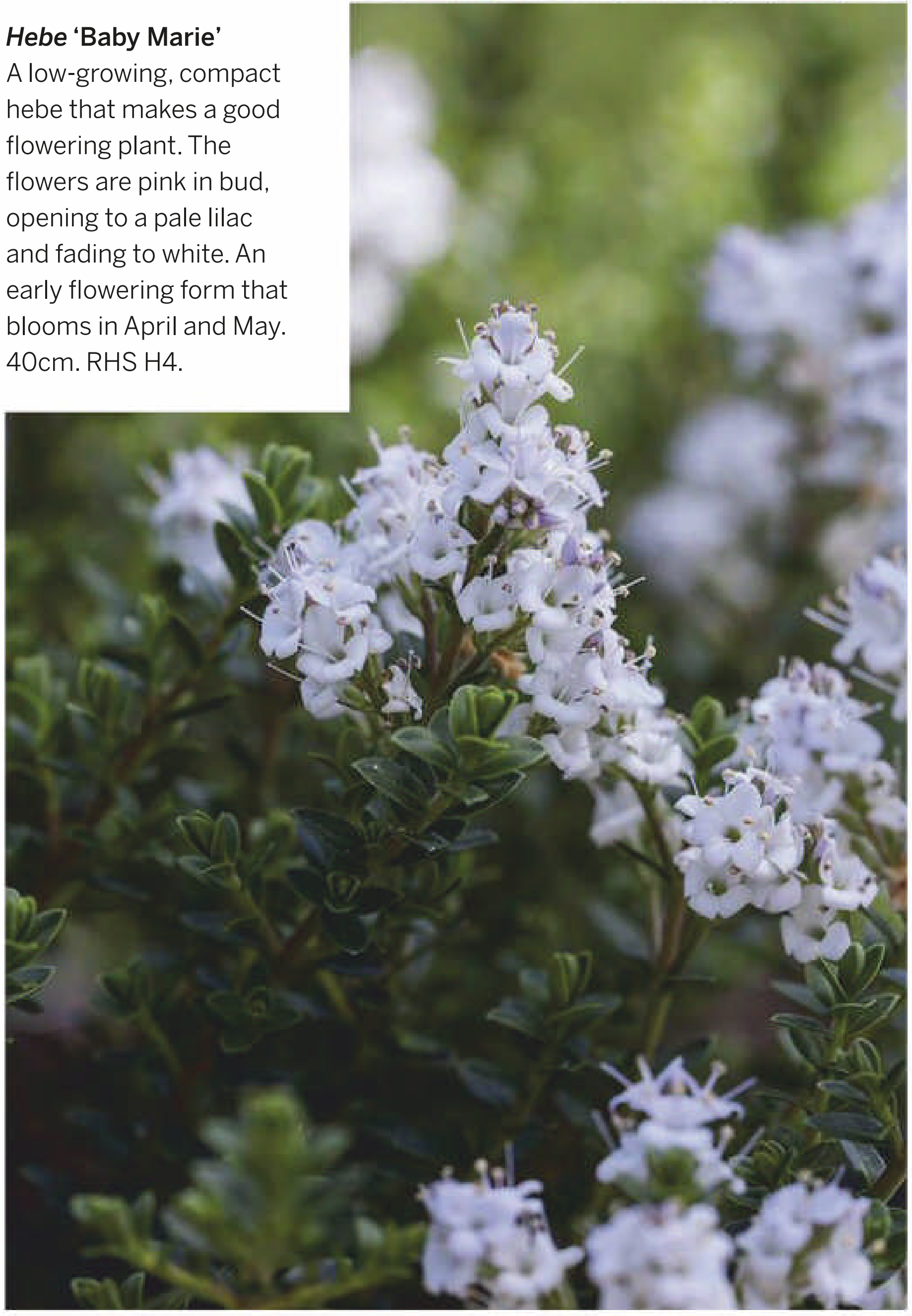
***Hebe* Blush Elegance (= 'Lowele')**
A large and floriferous shrub with glossy, green foliage that is covered with soft-pink flowers from July through to October. The flowers fade almost to white as they age. 1.2m. RHS H3.



***Hebe* Midnight Sky (= 'Lowten')**
A startling sight in winter when the glossy, green leaves turn deep purple, sometimes looking almost black. The flowers appear from June to August and are a purplish-pink colour. 75cm. RHS H4.



***Hebe* 'Caledonia'**
A compact, rounded plant that is ideal for a container. The striking, dark-green leaves have a red edge and are entirely plum-coloured when they emerge. Violet flowers from late spring to early autumn. 60cm. AGM. RHS H4, USDA 7a-10b.



***Hebe* 'Baby Marie'**
A low-growing, compact hebe that makes a good flowering plant. The flowers are pink in bud, opening to a pale lilac and fading to white. An early flowering form that blooms in April and May. 40cm. RHS H4.

MANY THANKS TO LOWATERS NURSERY IN HAMPSHIRE WHERE THESE IMAGES WERE TAKEN.

Propagation

It is ironic that a plant named for the Greek goddess of youth should be short-lived. Although some hebes will still be looking good after a decade or so, most will perform at their best for a shorter time and then need to be replaced. Hebes are one of the easiest shrubs to take cuttings from, so rather than buying a replacement plant, have a go at propagating your own. Begin the process as soon as your hebe starts to look sad, and by the time you need to remove it you will have a new plant ready.

Cuttings can be taken from mid July until early September. Using sharp secateurs, cut off stems of the current season's growth that are about 15-20cm long. Immediately pop these into a plastic bag and keep them in the shade until you are indoors and ready to pot them.

Fill your containers with a proprietary cuttings compost or a mix of 50 per cent compost and 50 per cent horticultural grit, then water the pot and allow it to drain. A 9cm pot will take three or four cuttings. Prepare the cuttings by shortening them to about 10-15cm long, cutting just below the point where a set of leaves is growing. Remove the lower leaves and snip off the tip of the cutting. Push the cutting into the compost, close to the edge of the pot.

If you want belt-and-braces security, you can dip the end of the cutting in hormone rooting powder or rooting gel. If you have a greenhouse or cold frame, store the cuttings there, otherwise cover the pot and cuttings with a plastic bag in a light, warm place away from direct sunlight. Regularly remove the bag to reduce the humidity around the cuttings. By the following spring, the cuttings will have rooted and can be transplanted into individual pots filled with a loam-based potting compost.

Cultivation

Hebes need poor, well-drained soil in an open, sunny situation. Ignore the usual advice to incorporate compost when you plant shrubs and don't give them an annual feed. Too rich a soil will encourage weak, lax growth that will be susceptible to frost damage. If you have heavy soil, digging lots of horticultural grit into the area before you plant will increase the likelihood of your hebe thriving. Hebes do not like cold wind, so try to plant them in a sheltered area.

A light, annual pruning will keep the neat, compact shape of hebes and ensure that they flower well. Immediately after they have finished flowering simply cut out the dead flowers. After a harsh winter some stems may have been burnt by frost. Inspect your hebes at the end of March and prune away any damaged stems, cutting back to a live bud. I have seen small-leaved hebes tightly clipped into balls as an alternative to box. This looks attractive but does mean that the flowers are sacrificed.

Where to buy

- **Ashwood Nurseries**
  Ashwood Lower
  Lane, Kingswinford,
  West Midlands DY6 0AE.
  Tel 01384 401996,
  ashwoodnurseries.com
- **Burncoose Nurseries**
  Gwennap, Redruth,
  Cornwall TR16 6BJ.
  Tel 01209 860316,
  burncoose.co.uk
- **Garden Cottage Nursery**
  Tournaig, Poolewe,
  Wester Ross IV22 2LH.
  Tel 01445 781777,
  gcnursery.co.uk
- **Lowaters**
  Plants from this specialist
  hebe breeder can be
  purchased by mail order
  through its Garden Beauty
  website.gardenbeauty.co.uk

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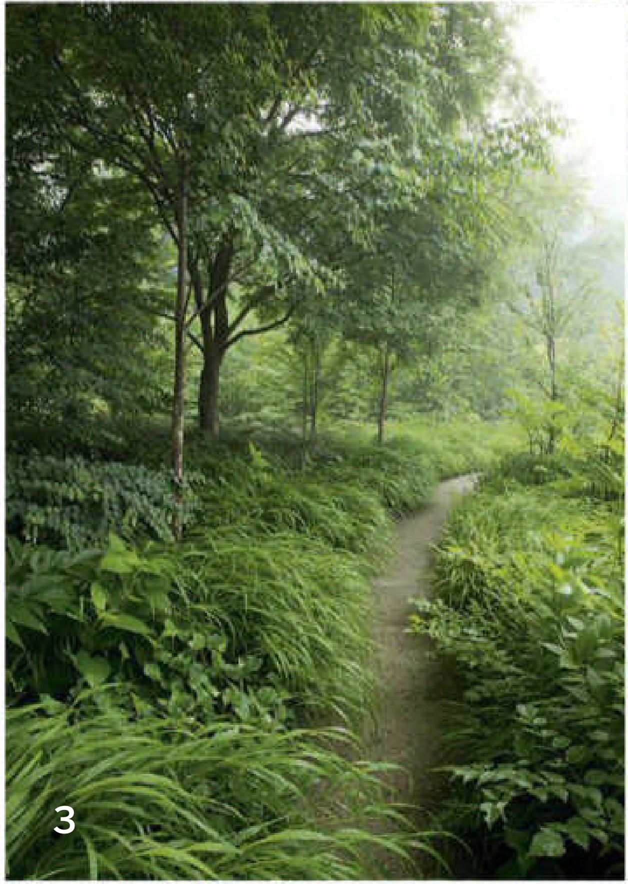
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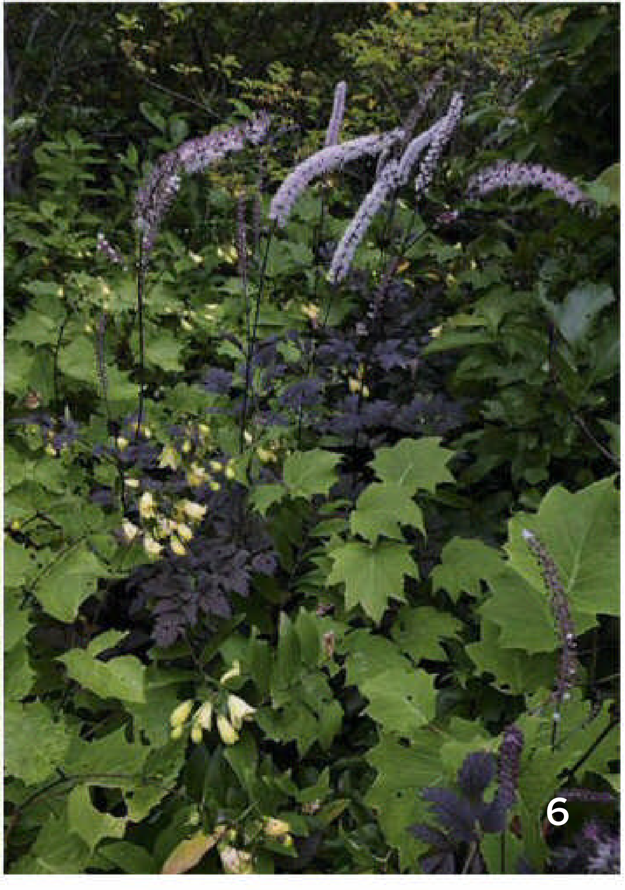
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1, 2, 4, 5, 6 KIICHI NORO; 3 SHOGO OIZUMI.

The 1,000-year garden

In his new book, designer Dan Pearson considers the lessons learned over the past 20 years in creating a garden at the Tokachi Millennium Forest in Japan, aimed at helping us reconnect with nature for generations to come

WORDS DAN PEARSON AND MIDORI SHINTANI

While I draw upon the existing environment as inspiration and the essence of a place drives my decision-making in the design process, understanding how plants coexist in their setting is key. Making a naturalistic garden means not only looking at the individuals but at the communities of plants and how they perform as one.

The planting in the Meadow Garden [at the Tokachi Millennium Forest] is designed to work as one entity so that it evolves in much the same way as that of a real meadow. To emulate the complexity of the meadow and its natural order, I developed a series of plant mixes as the first step in the process. The combinations within the mixes would echo the rhythms of a meadow as it rises from dormancy in the spring and then changes as one species supersedes the next throughout the season. The mixes allow us to choose groups of plants that are happy in each other's company and are complementary in terms of providing contrast and seasonal interest. Though the zoning is not obvious when looking at the garden initially, the mixes allow for changes across the site that can adapt to differing conditions, be it the shady woodland edge or the high open ground in full light. They also provide shifts in mood, with some being more complex and engaging close to the main boardwalk and others allowing for an easy flow so that the eye can travel.

The garden was planted, as planned, in the spring of 2008, so one of my key tasks when I first met [head gardener] Midori Shintani was to explain that the garden was intended to be an echo of a natural environment.

We touched on the realities of maintaining something that was designed to evolve and would not, by definition, be something we could entirely plan for. Our yearly meetings and email communications help in steering the direction and we have responded to the planting as gardeners, since we are not ecologists, but always with an eye to letting the planting lead the way. Of course, there have been challenges, because in truth the complexity of a real meadow is far more dynamic. Just one square metre might contain 20 to 30 species and the competitive nature of the ecosystem is consequently self-monitoring.

As the garden has evolved in its first ten years, we have been able to see what is working and what is struggling. Having reached a point where the original mixes had generally achieved an equilibrium, we have since been adjusting and augmenting the plantings to make them work harder. The initial principles have remained in place, but the matrix has required manipulation. Sometimes a mix has needed a percentage reduction of a plant that has become too dominant, such as the *Filipendula camtschatica*, but there have also been unexpected failures. With the exception of the thermopsis [which immediately proved itself to be a problematic runner], we have given all plants a minimum of three, usually five, years to confirm that they are not suited to the climate and explore potential replacements. *Levisticum officinale* and *Ligularia* 'The Rocket', for instance, have simply not thrived. We also thought that *Asclepias incarnata* from the American prairies would have found a parallel climate, but it too has merely limped on.

The mixes respond differently from year to year, to climatic changes that favour or discourage a particular species. Natural life cycles also assert their peaks and troughs and our annual walks in the garden help us to decide how to steer the garden in the coming year. The climate also encourages a fast turnaround. Plants such as *Salvia nemorosa* 'Caradonna', though perfectly hardy, need adding to every year since their natural life cycle ▷

1 *Valeriana officinalis* shortly before it is cut to the base to prevent it seeding, with *Cephalaria gigantea* beyond.
2 *Iris* x *robusta* 'Gerald Darby' used in the planting where the woodland transitions to the meadow.
3 *Hakonechloa macra* grows along the paths in the woodland glade.
4 *Baptisia australis*.
5 Early planting mix, still dominated by green. The swathe of *Achillea* 'Coronation Gold' that runs through this mix is just colouring with *Baptisia leucantha* in flower as an early emergent. *Cephalaria gigantea* is just rising to flower, but is still less than half its ultimate height.
6 *Actaea simplex* (Atropurpurea Group) 'Black Negligee' with *Kirengeshoma palmata*.

> The combinations within the mixes would echo the rhythms of the meadow as it rises from dormancy in the spring and changes as one species supersedes the next

▷ on [the island of] Hokkaido is around three years rather than the five we can expect in the UK before they need replacement or division. The short-lived plants such as *Knautia macedonica* are treated like biennials and allowed to seed into gaps, with the oldest plants removed as they start to splay. They are worth this effort for their summer-long display of flower. A small number of *Echinacea* 'Hot Summer' have also been added to add drama as you enter the garden. Though the red echinaceas tend not to be reliable perennials, they prove their worth with ornamental impact, and so are replaced year on year. Such additions to the mixes and responsiveness to the ebb and flow keep the mixes feeling vital and yearly change prevents the garden from ever feeling static. In maintaining a garden of this size with a limited workforce we have to measure the energies that are available and our yearly plans forecast tasks that need to be carried out the following year.

It has been a process of observation and acting fast where imbalance was evident, but trying not to tamper where we saw the potential of a mix reaching equilibrium. Each plant has its own life span in the mixes and the long-lived plants, such as the baptisia, are proving their worth for being steadfast. We aspire to longevity, but even the plants that stay put and do well need adjusting as they shift the balance by becoming too dominant. The art is in knowing where to adjust and where not to and then responding in timely fashion to maintain the balance, both in the community of plants and in the aesthetic which, by definition, is subject to change as the garden matures. ❑

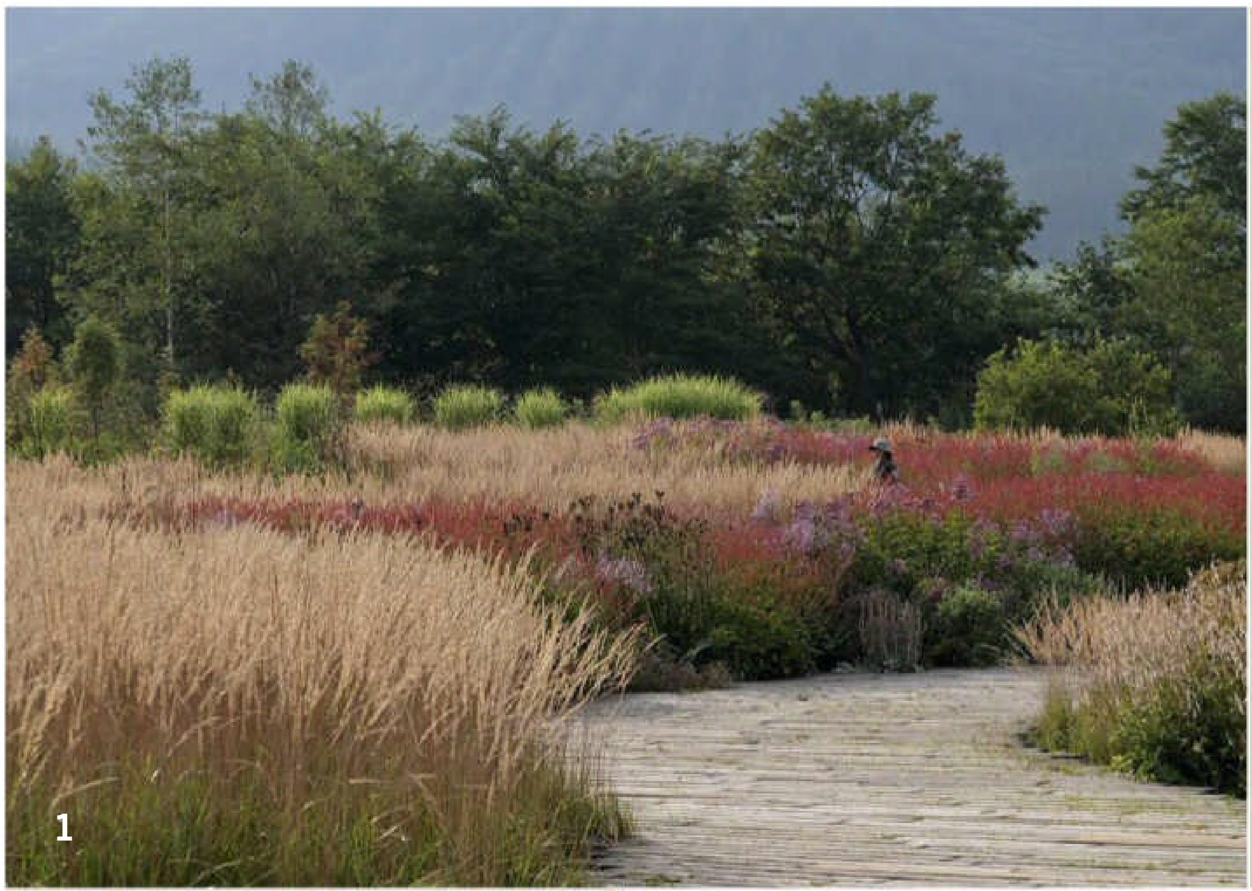
Tokachi Millennium Forest: Pioneering a New Way of Gardening with Nature, Dan Pearson with Midori Shintani, Filbert Press, £40. **OFFER** Receive a signed first edition of the book as part of this month's subscription offer. See page 24 for details.

Midori Shintani – Finding your own wild

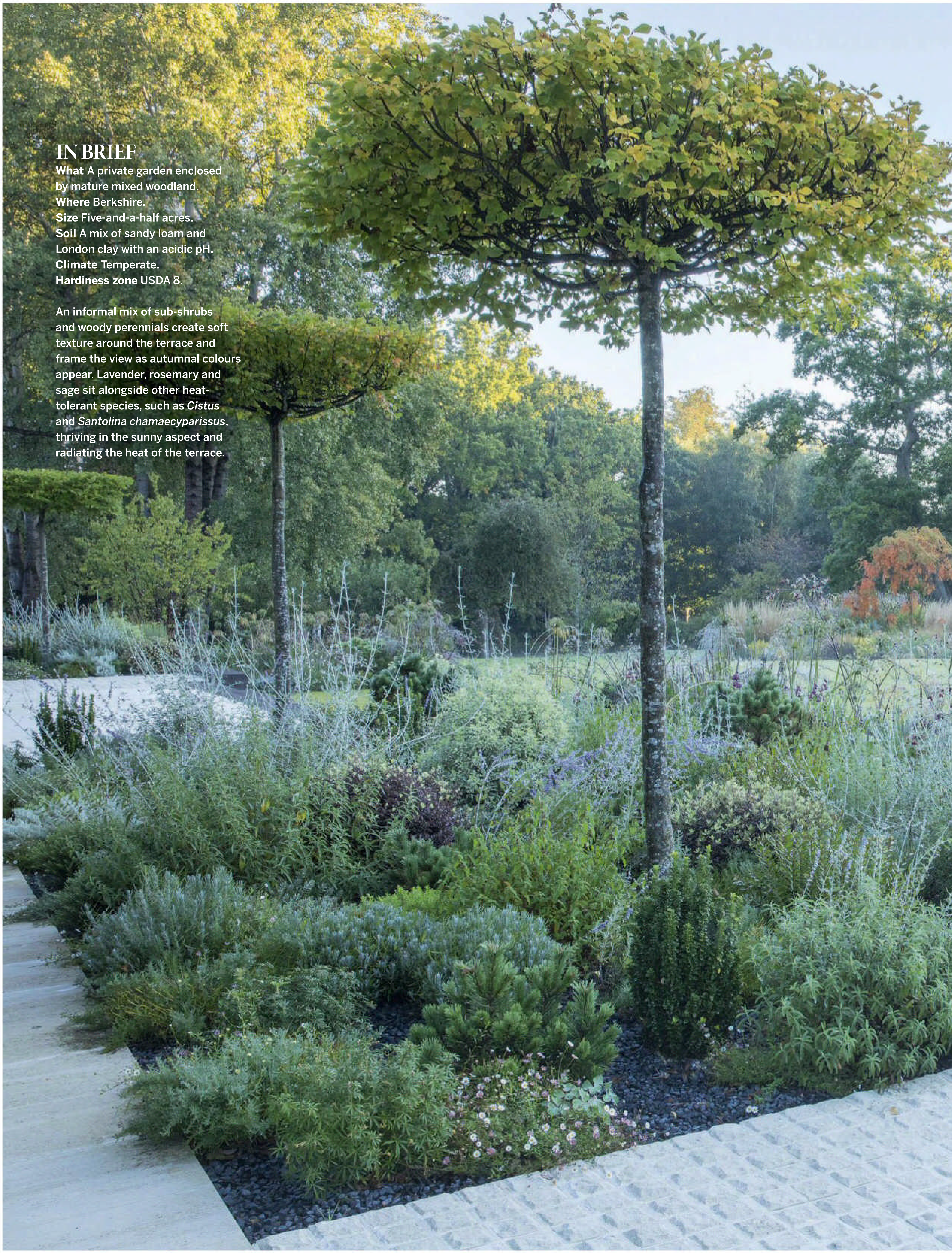
As can be seen in the expression 'plants and trees all have something to say', the ancient Japanese revered nature and had a deep affinity with plants. In the oldest Japanese poems composed in the eighth century, we can meet our ancestors and sense that in their appreciation of plants they found the beauty of evanescence. Finding a brilliance and grace to look on flowers in full bloom, at the same time embracing a sense of transience and mutability, we find a beauty in flowers destined to fall soon. Tiny, delicate changes in sky, wind, light and every element of nature occur around us through the year. Responding sensitively to such natural phenomena, the ancient Japanese calendar of 72 seasons developed. In literature, paintings, *ikebana* and gardens, all Japanese art culture springs from aesthetics based on the appreciation of plants and the view of nature.

In the Millennium Forest, we cherish this traditional Japanese view of nature in nurturing our modern garden. We are trying to evoke people's physical sensations and emotions experienced in nature by the naturalistic planting of the Meadow Garden. As we walk along the narrow path like an animal track, the red flowers of *Sanguisorba officinalis* will pop out and touch our shoulders and arms cheerfully. When we walk under the overwhelming height of *Cephalaria gigantea*, our hearts will pound with excitement. Every time we meet a plant, our minds keep moving with feelings of surprise, joy and sometimes fear. Eventually it delivers deep peace to the mind as a memory of 'the nature of the garden', and we realise that we are a part of nature.

1 *Persicaria amplexicaulis* 'Atrosanguinea' provides a peak of high-summer colour in the centre of the garden.
2 *Rosa sericea* subsp. *omeiensis* f. *pteracantha*.
3 *Echinacea* 'Hot Summer'.
4 The Meadow Garden is cut back in October, ahead of the long winter, so that the rapid growth of spring is able to get away immediately after the thaw.
5 The first wave of colour comprises *Gillenia trifoliata* and *Salvia nemorosa* 'Caradonna'.
6 *Rosa glauca*.



KIICHI NORO



IN BRIEF

What A private garden enclosed by mature mixed woodland.
Where Berkshire.
Size Five-and-a-half acres.
Soil A mix of sandy loam and London clay with an acidic pH.
Climate Temperate.
Hardiness zone USDA 8.

An informal mix of sub-shrubs and woody perennials create soft texture around the terrace and frame the view as autumnal colours appear. Lavender, rosemary and sage sit alongside other heat-tolerant species, such as *Cistus* and *Santolina chamaecyparissus*, thriving in the sunny aspect and radiating the heat of the terrace.

Changing colour

Encircled by a woodland of English oak, beech and cedar, structure and colour come to the fore in a beautiful and constantly evolving garden

WORDS **BENJAMIN WILLIAM POPE** PHOTOGRAPHS **MARIANNE MAJERUS**

In life there are pivotal moments that set an alternative trajectory, welcoming change, new experiences and opportunities. For Cambridge-based garden designer Rob Chew, one such moment occurred five years ago while visiting potential clients in Ascot. "There was an instant trust and understanding," recalls Rob, "no strict brief as such, just requests for a lawn, long garden vistas and lots of colour throughout the year."

The trust and friendship grew steadily over time, as did the size of garden, which had previously been divided by several large hedges. Spaces, including a tennis court, were cleared, along with a span of leylandii screening that reached more than 20 metres into the sky. Brambles were removed and old stands of rhododendron reduced, revealing a mature boundary planting of English oak (*Quercus robur*) and beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), along with coniferous species such as incense cedar (*Calocedrus decurrens*), Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) and western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*). This mixed woodland perimeter would prove to be essential to the garden, setting the tone as it gently held the site separating it from nearby properties.

More transformations were afoot as the existing house was rebuilt to appease the owners' changing lifestyle. The result was a large, open expanse of approximately five-and-a-half acres surrounding the new house. Of course, the site was not without challenges as the lower half of the garden, where the sandy soil meets a band of London clay, would sit wet in winter. To alleviate this, 1,000 metric tonnes of Fawley top soil was mixed with the 650 tonnes of excess soil already on site. The garden was levelled, allowing for a substantial lawn, gently sloping topography and a sweeping drive. Flower borders were included, being more formal and geometric around the house and terrace, and becoming soft and curved further away. Discussions between Rob and the clients continued, resulting in the creation of a kitchen garden to one side of the house and to the other, a quiet, reflective space to practise yoga.

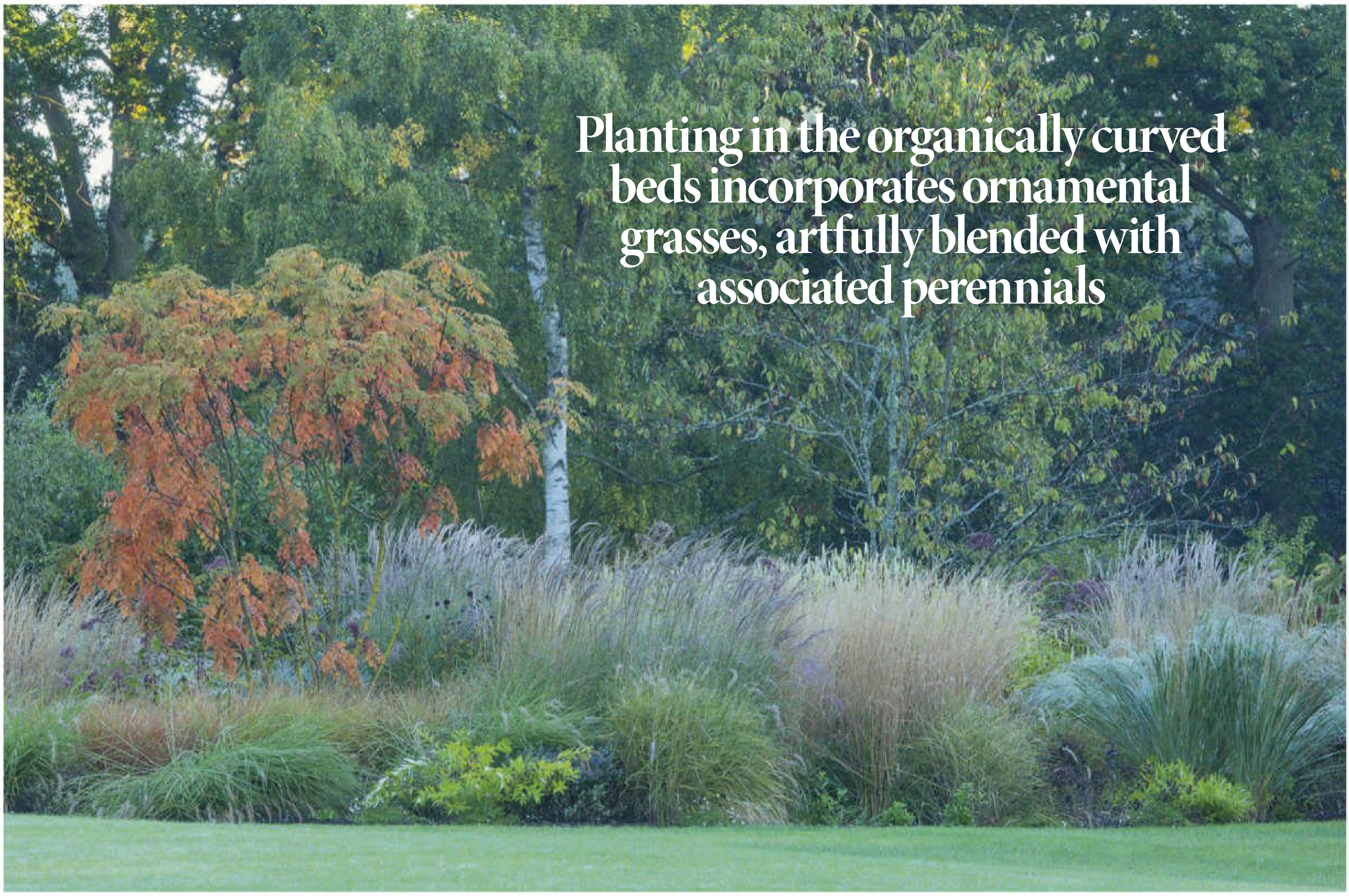
Five years on and the garden feels very established. The boundary planting is soft and provides the perfect backdrop to the garden. A verdant lawn gently slips away from the house, weaving its way through the organically curved beds that both frame and ▷

Above The house sits central to the garden, balanced by the mature trees and substantial lawn that surround it. Large windows take in wide views of the garden, while table-top hornbeam and containerised *Phyllostachys aurea* grow close, emphasising the strong connection between house and garden.

Facing page top Mixed planting softens the edges of the terrace, containing *Agapanthus* 'Ovatus', *Nepeta* x *faassenii* and *Salvia nemorosa* 'Caradonna' among other perennials. *Panicum virgatum* and *Stipa gigantea* add movement, while *Rosa glauca* and *Pinus mugo* add structure.

Facing page below Reflective pools and a raised deck provide a quieter spot in the garden. Loose plantings of *Carex testacea* and *Hakonechloa macra* cushion the topiarised yew. A multi-stemmed *Prunus serrula* and plantings of *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster' maintain privacy while offering selected views.

Specimen trees act as points where the eye can rest; choosing trees of different maturity means existing plants integrate with the new additions



Planting in the organically curved beds incorporates ornamental grasses, artfully blended with associated perennials

▷ obscure views. Here the planting is naturalistic, incorporating ornamental grasses, artfully blended with associated perennials. As you move through the garden, the tempo of the planting changes. Around the terrace, angular borders are complemented by architectural domes of *Cistus* x *purpureus* 'Alan Fradd', *Pinus mugo* 'Gnom' and *Pittosporum tenuifolium* 'Tom Thumb', intricately woven together with the silvery foliage of *Salvia yangii* 'Blue Spire' and *Teucrium fruticans*. *Erigeron karvinskianus* and prostrate rosemary scramble through the beds, adding more colour and a sense of informality. In contrast, a generous swathe of 45 *Betula utilis* sweep across the west side of the lawn. Their glowing, white trunks are simply underplanted with floriferous *Geranium* Rozanne (= 'Gerwat'), giving this bold statement some lasting seasonal colour. Rob emphasises how important it was to "keep the planting simple, so that its striking visual effect can be felt from across the garden". This technique is repeated elsewhere in the garden, where a large ribbon of *Erica* x *darleyensis* f. *albiflora* 'White Perfection' proves to be one of the standout heathers, flowering through the darker winter months.

Overall, the planting is an eclectic and informed mix of herbaceous perennials, grasses, shrubs and trees, injecting colour and interest throughout the year. Specimen trees appear throughout the garden, acting as destinations where the eye can rest. *Cedrus atlantica*, *Picea pungens* 'Fat Albert' and *Pinus mugo* offer important evergreen structure while echoing the conifers along the boundary. These are complemented by many deciduous species including *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*, *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* and *Taxodium distichum*, which ignite the garden with their autumn garb. As there is a mix in plant species, so there is a mix in size. When planting, trees of different maturity were selected so that the existing plants softly integrated with their new additions. Looking across the garden there is no harsh line between old and new – instead a colourful mix of foliage and flower to enjoy throughout the year. □

USEFUL INFORMATION
Find out more about Rob's work at **abbotswoodgardendesign.co.uk**

Above As autumn approaches, the fiery foliage and coppery seedpods of *Koelreuteria paniculata* take centre stage among the seedheads of *Anemanthele lessoniana*, *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Kleine Silberspinne' and *Panicum virgatum* 'Shenandoah'.

Facing page top A grove of white-stemmed *Betula utilis* stand in front of dark rhododendron foliage. As summer fades, the energising blue of *Geranium* Rozanne (= 'Gerwat') complements the autumnal leaves of both the birch and *Cornus sanguinea* 'Midwinter Fire'.

Facing page below Curving around one side of the terrace, the kitchen garden comprises large, raised, oak planters. By high summer, white cosmos and tagetes spill from the planters, which are also home to vegetables and herbs. Woven obelisks add height and provide support for *Lathyrus odoratus* cultivars and climbing beans.

HORTICULTURAL WHO'S WHO

ALAN POWER

Stourhead's outgoing garden and estate manager on the range of emotions embodied by one of the National Trust's most iconic landscapes, and new challenges awaiting his return to the country of his birth

WORDS AMBRA EDWARDS PORTRAIT CHARLIE HOPKINSON

Alan Power has become, in many ways, the voice of National Trust gardens. He has worked for the Trust for 25 years, at two of its most iconic gardens, Stourhead and Mount Stewart, and for over a decade he spoke to BBC Radio 4 audiences every autumn with bulletins from Stourhead on the *PM* programme, describing the magical effect of the landscape changing day by day. This in turn led to presenting on *Gardeners' World* and on the series *Gardens In Time*, treating viewers to a bird's-eye view of Stowe (another 18th-century landscape garden) from the top of a colossal cedar; Alan trained as an arborist after studying horticulture, and first came to Stourhead in 1996 to survey and manage its collection of trees.

Present some head gardeners with a voice recorder, let alone a television camera, and they wince but not Alan. He stands up straighter, lowers his voice, and begins to perform. He'll say it's the love of language, of storytelling. It's not a development he would have predicted – he was a painfully shy boy, who hated school and was always a bit on the edge. As a teenager, he'd take off to the mountains of County Kerry in southwest Ireland as often as he could. It was his mother who taught him gardening; he would see her face light up, he recalls, whenever he showed an interest. She was thrilled when he chose horticulture as a career.

ALAN HAS FELT HIS SPIRITS SOAR, WALKING IN THE GARDEN AT STOURHEAD WITH HIS TODDLER SON

"Gardening for me is about the story it tells," he says. And the story that has inspired him for decades is that of Henry Hoare, the art-loving banker who created Stourhead in Wiltshire. "I feel I know him quite well, and his grandson Richard Colt Hoare. I've read all their letters and I've nearly been in tears reading when Henry lost his wife and his kids, and then his joy when his daughter was getting married into a good family. It's heartbreaking. They called him 'Henry the Magnificent' and he was: he had all the weight of tragedy and loss on his shoulders, the burden of making a success of his business – but still he held his head up, maintained his passion for his creation. He had the confidence to do something contemporary and different – and then to upset his family by leaving the estate to his grandson, because he had an instinct that he would cherish the garden. The family is what the garden is all about: it was their successes, their sorrows, their happiness, their pain that made Stourhead." Above all, he feels, the garden embodies Henry's astonishing capacity for joy.

And Stourhead has become a repository of sorrow and of joy also for many of the 450,000 visitors who pass through the gate every year. Some are recorded in the garden's memorial book. Others, crying quietly into the lake at the end of the day, have just told him their stories. Alan, too, has wept into the lake at bad times, and also felt his spirits soar, walking in the garden with his toddler son, earnestly naming buttercups and cow parsley and 'stinky garlic'. It is hard to walk away from such memories.

"But it feels as if the stars are aligned," he says. "It's the right time to leave Stourhead." His two older sons are settled. The months of closure in brilliant sunshine, have felt like a parting gift – a chance to barrel through his to-do list – but also an exquisitely prolonged farewell. His destination is Derreen on Kerry's Beara Peninsula, a sub-tropical seaside garden warmed by the Gulf Stream: he can't wait to get his hands on its astonishing plant collection.

Above all, he feels Stourhead is in good order. Last year he had a visit from John Sales, former head of gardens at the Trust, and initiator in 1978 of a 100-year conservation plan for Stourhead – the first of its kind. The congratulatory letter of thanks he received from Sales and his wife brought yet more tears to his eyes. "That meant more to me than any report I've had in the past ten years – I couldn't have been prouder."

If John Sales believed he'd done a decent job, he could walk away with a light heart. And start planning how, over the next 20 years, he will turn romantically tangled, little-known Derreen into another world-class garden. □

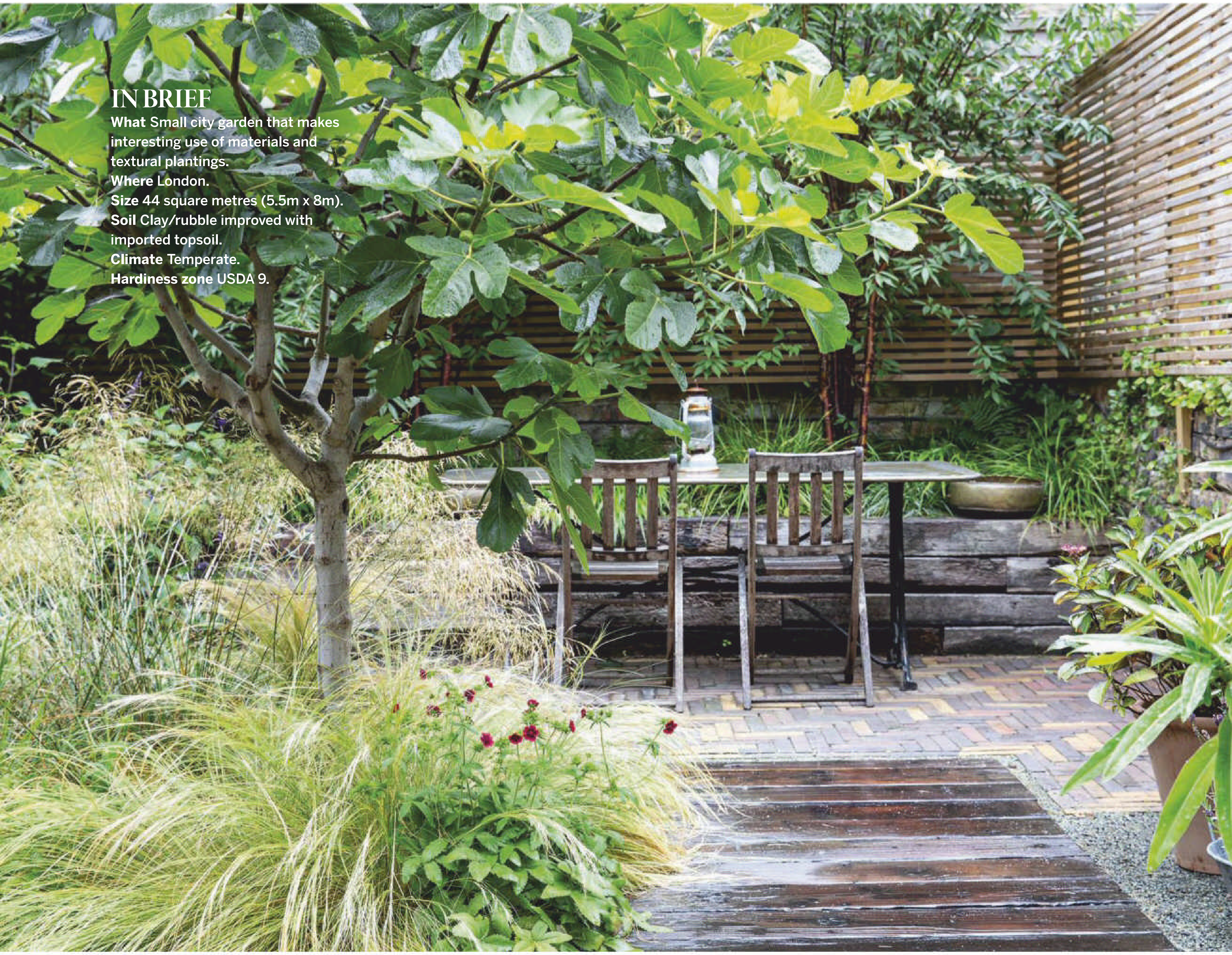
USEFUL INFORMATION

Stourhead, Stourton, Warminster, Wilstshire BA12 6QF.
Tel 01747 841152, nationaltrust.org.uk/stourhead
The garden at Stourhead is open. Tickets must be booked by 3pm the day before visiting.

Using different layers of planting, designer Ula Maria has created the space with soul her clients desired, full of contrast and character

A layered approach

WORDS NATASHA GOODFELLOW PHOTOGRAPHS RACHEL WARNE



IN BRIEF

What Small city garden that makes interesting use of materials and textural plantings.
Where London.
Size 44 square metres (5.5m x 8m).
Soil Clay/rubble improved with imported topsoil.
Climate Temperate.
Hardiness zone USDA 9.

Some of us like a very ordered approach in our lives: a place for everything and everything in its place. Others prefer things to be a little more free and easy, with space for the unexpected. The young, creative owners of this garden in Stoke Newington, east London, fall firmly into the second camp.

Having been impressed by designer Ula Maria's work (Ula was RHS Young Designer 2017), they approached her in the hope that she could bring a similar sensitivity to their north-facing plot. "They didn't want anything too polished or perfect," says Ula. "They wanted it to have character and texture, to feel like it had soul." There were some more tangible requirements too: space for a large dining table; a contemporary feel with a sense of warmth in the materials; a strong connection between indoors and out; and a wish that the garden could be made to seem a little larger than it actually is.

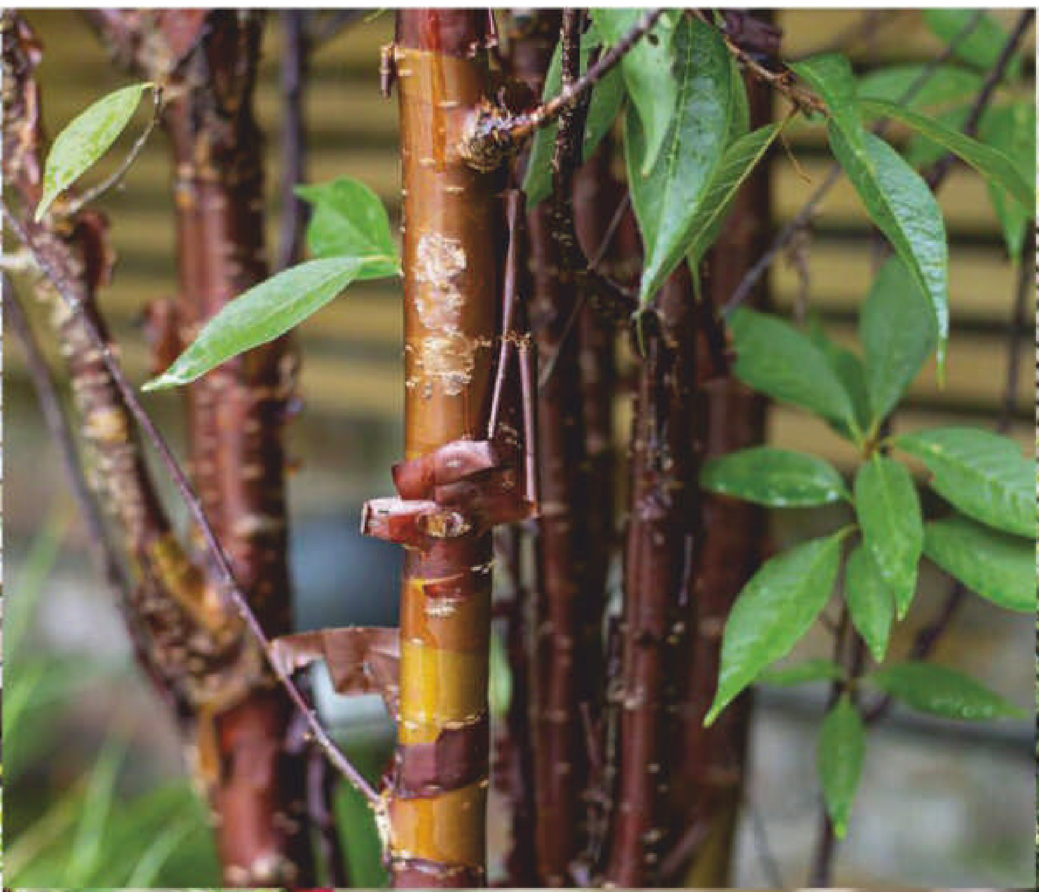
Ula had a blank canvas to work with. She took as her starting point the view from the kitchen, imagining the bi-fold doors as a frame within which to compose a picture. Pots fill the foreground; a striking fig tree (*Ficus carica* 'Brown Turkey') underplanted with matte, diaphanous grasses forms a voluminous mid-layer (which prevents the whole space from being seen at once); and a row of glossy-barked Tibetan cherries ▷

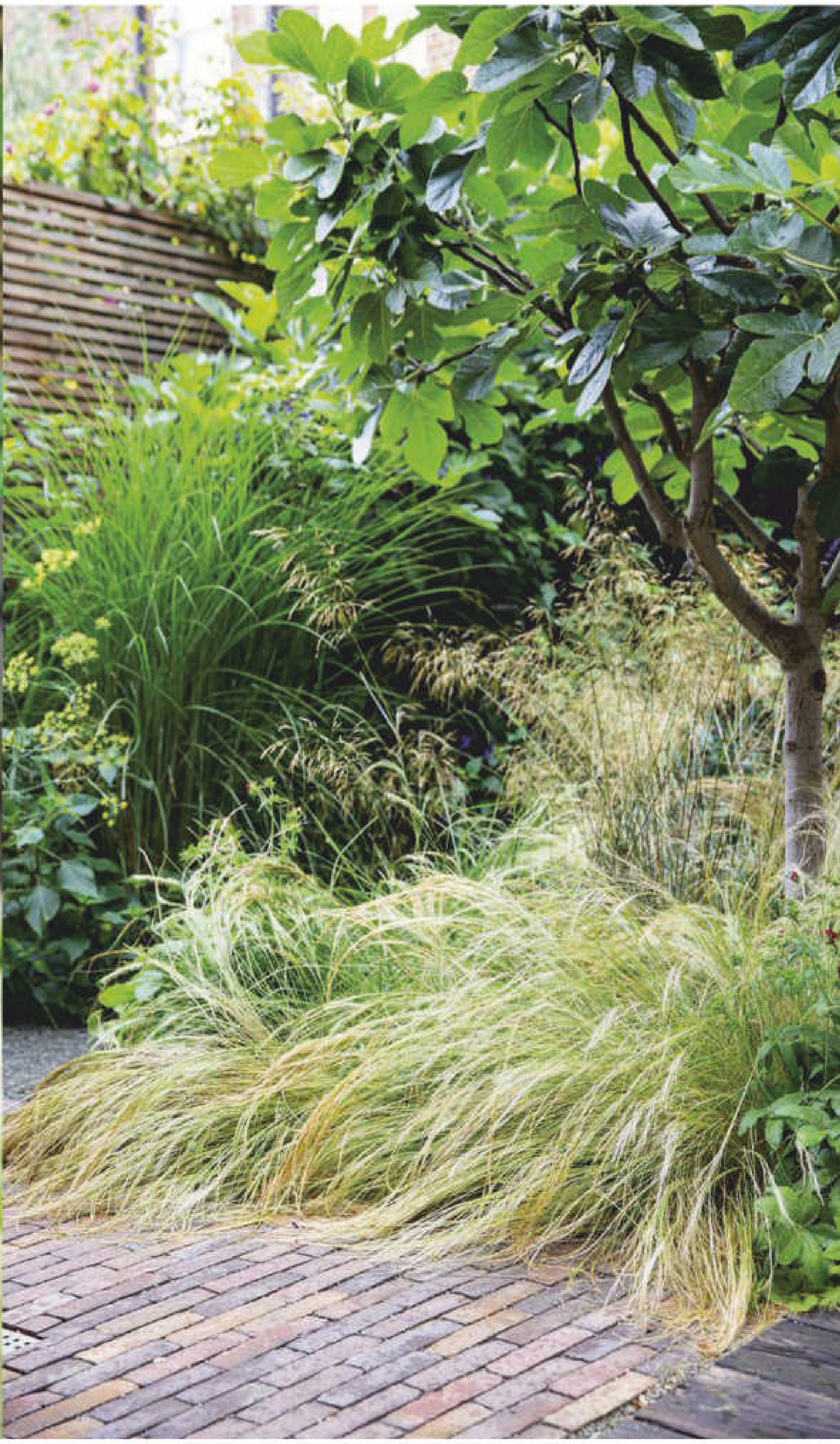
Clockwise from below left
Ula's design is very textural – note here the contrasting presence of the glossy-leaved fig, the breezy grasses and the small, narrow leaves of the Tibetan cherries at the back, a combination that also demonstrates the different layers of the garden. Alongside slatted panels offer privacy but give a sense of space and airiness.

The attractive, coppery-brown bark of *Prunus serrula.*

Stipa tenuissima nestles under a fig tree (*Ficus carica* 'Brown Turkey').

The dark-centred, raspberry-pink flowers of *Potentilla thurberi* 'Monarch's Velvet' add a dramatic splash of colour.





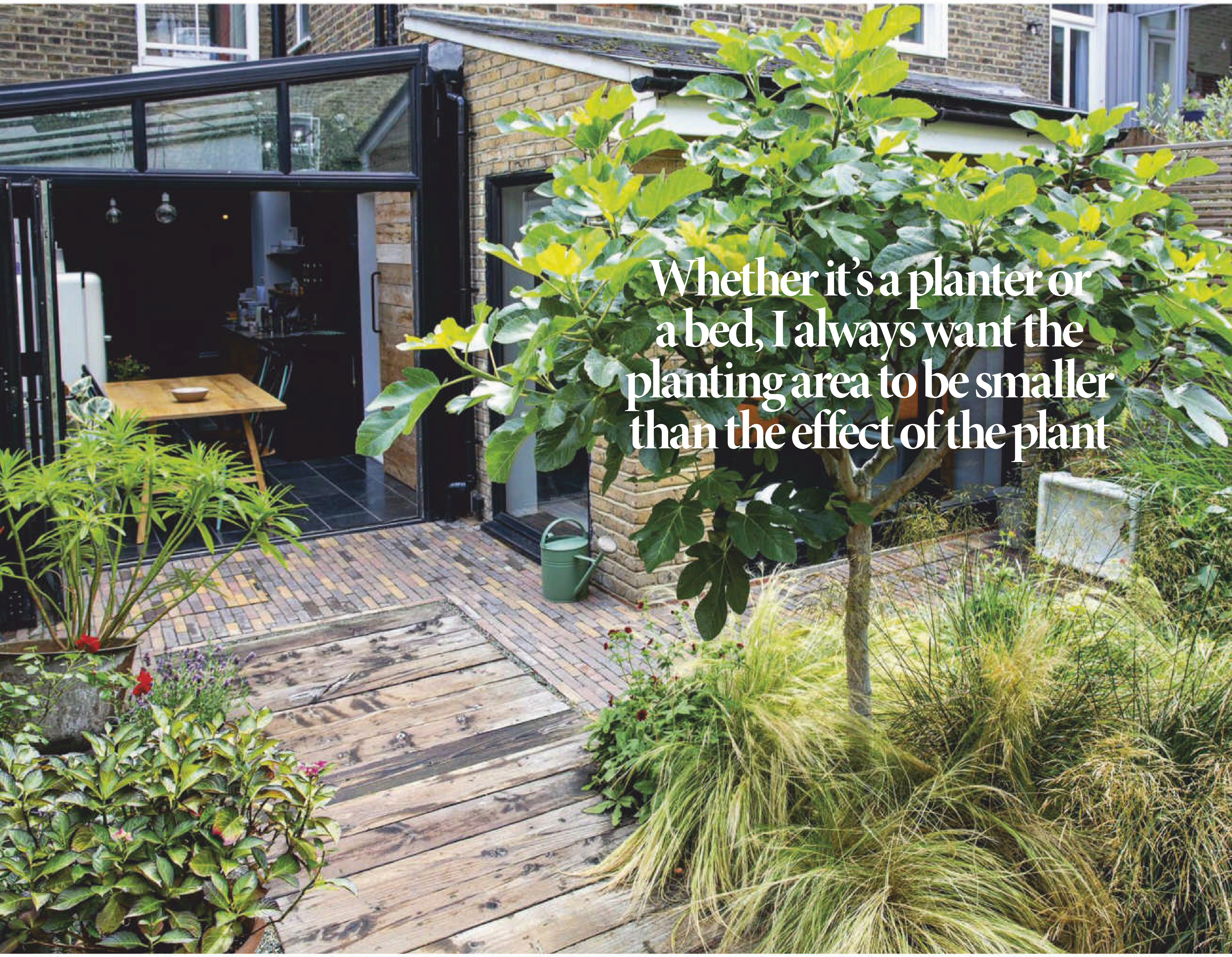
Below Ula used a combination of brick (laid in two different patterns), wood and gravel for the hard landscaping. This same wooden walkway featured in her 2018 garden at RHS Hampton Court Palace Garden Flower Show. Here she has imagined it as a bridge between the two brick areas. The garden is on the same level as the house, maximising the link between outside and in, and the architectural foliage of evergreen *Euphorbia mellifera*, with its bright-green, pale-veined leaves, makes a striking statement in a pot, alongside herbs and seasonal flowering plants.

▷ (*Prunus serrula*) stands at the rear to draw the eye beyond. These handsome multi-stemmed trees sit in a bed expertly constructed by landscaper Mark Whyman from old railway sleepers discovered during the build.

A common response in such a small space is to opt for a limited material palette, but Ula has instead used a combination of brick (laid in two different patterns), wood and gravel. “Normally I like to keep things simple, but here I really wanted to create a space rich with texture and interest,” she says. Since the budget didn’t stretch to a crane, every element had to be carefully considered to make sure it could be brought down a steep flight of stairs and through the flat.

For the contemporary feel the clients requested, Ula kept the design to clean-cut, geometric shapes – interlocking squares and rectangles – albeit with the edges considerably softened by the planting. “Whether it’s a planter or a bed, I always want the planting area to be smaller than the effect of the plant,” she says. “In this way, small areas of planting can absolutely transform a space and bring it to life.”

The clients had a particularly strong experience of this. Having been present for much of the garden build, they were away the weekend the garden was planted. Ula reused several plants from her 2018 garden at RHS Hampton Court Palace Garden



Whether it’s a planter or a bed, I always want the planting area to be smaller than the effect of the plant

Flower Show. "As they were already mature, the change was dramatic – the clients just couldn't believe it," she says.

Two years on and the couple are still in touch with Ula, sending regular updates and pictures as the garden changes through the months. Narcissi and snowdrops herald the spring and then the space turns lush and green for summer, before taking on tints of browns and bronze in autumn. In winter the skeletons of the trees provide interest, along with the evergreen *Euphorbia mellifera* – one of Ula's favourite plants – in a pot. "I really enjoy seeing the seasons changing," says Ula. "It's so nice to celebrate that."

The growth rate of all the plants has been spectacular, but one in particular has exceeded all expectations. The salvia beneath the fig tree was supposed to be the relatively low-growing *S.* Love and Wishes (= 'Serendip6') but, judging by its colour, Ula believes that this may in fact be an especially vigorous *S.* 'Amistad' (it is now around 2m tall). "It always surprises me how fast things grow," says Ula. "Sometimes it can be a bit of a shock, but I'd much rather plants were abundant and happy than struggling." □

USEFUL INFORMATION
Find out more about Ula Maria's work at **ulamaria.com**

Clockwise from below left This vigorous *Salvia* 'Amistad', which is now taller than the fig tree, is one from Ula's 2018 garden at RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show.

The Tibetan cherries are underplanted with *Hakonechloa macra*, all contained within a bed built from reused railway sleepers.

The striking golden flowers of *Deschampsia cespitosa* 'Goldtau' form a veil through which the sea holly (*Eryngium* x *zabelii* 'Big Blue') can be seen.

The walled garden at Elizabeth MacGregor Nursery serves as a trial area in which to grow new plants and showcases a wide range of perennials. The sheltered site benefits from a mild southern Scottish climate, with warm summers and mild winters.

Star cluster

Elizabeth MacGregor Nursery in Scotland offers a range of perennial cultivars fit for a jewel garden, not least of which are the violas and anemones for which Elizabeth is famed

WORDS **MATTHEW REESE** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**

A little over 30 years ago, the esteemed plantsmen Elizabeth and Alasdair MacGregor moved to Ellenbank, near Kirkcudbright in Galloway, southwest Scotland, to start a nursery and garden. Now renowned for both growing and breeding plants, Elizabeth first discovered her passion for horticulture while studying art in Warwickshire. During this time, she acquired her first garden and very quickly realised she wanted to work with plants professionally. “My first obsession was clematis,” she remembers. “I was especially taken by the small-flowered viticella hybrids, of which there were so few then – only six or seven cultivars. As an amateur gardener, I started doing a little hybridising, which I found really interesting. From quite early on I realised that one could do this, and what was possible with a little more time.”

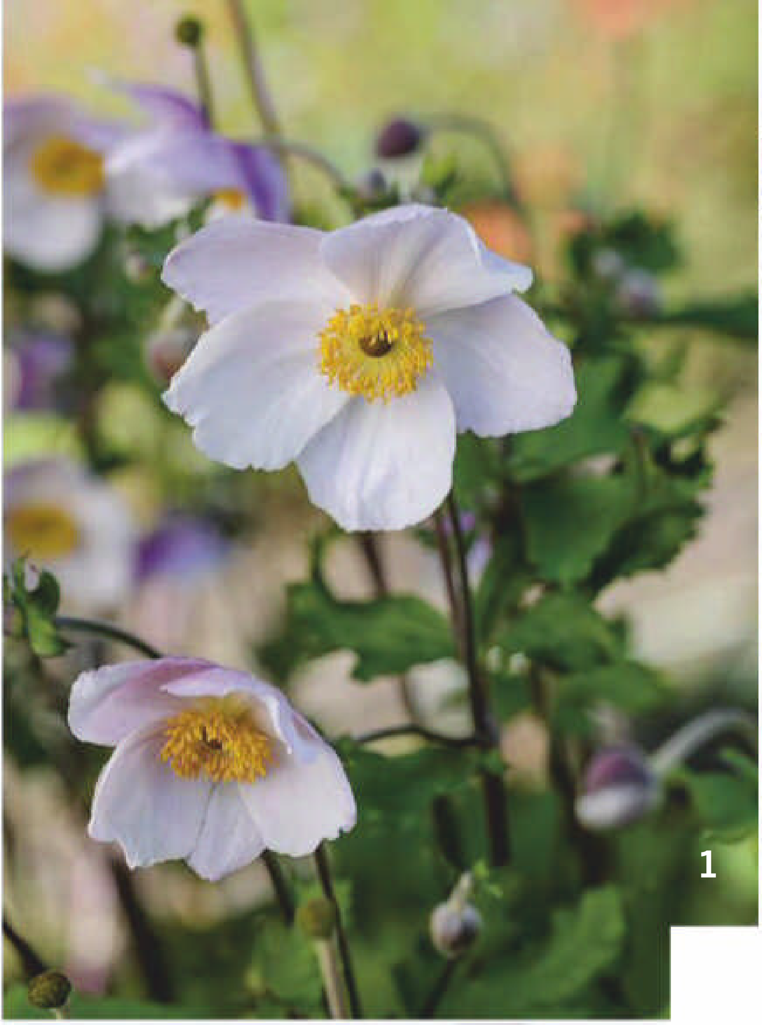
After completing horticultural courses at the Garden House in Devon, Elizabeth began her professional gardening career. She started with a small collection of violas, of which she was rather fond, selling the plants via mail order. This encouraged Elizabeth and Alasdair to consider setting up a larger nursery and, after much hunting, they eventually acquired Ellenbank, which had a small walled garden in which to grow and test plants and enough space for a nursery. The couple’s son, John, now helps run the thriving business.

In the days before the internet, horticultural shows were a particularly important way of promoting a nursery, and Elizabeth and Alasdair started with the Scottish shows before venturing south to RHS Flower Show Tatton Park in Cheshire. Here Elizabeth quickly honed her skills as an exhibitor, raking in no fewer than nine gold medals in nine consecutive years from 2003 to 2011, as well as an award for Most Creative Display in the RHS Floral Marquee in 2004 and Best Exhibit in 2007.

Her interest in plant breeding has not dimmed, and Elizabeth continues to experiment with hybridising plants. She combines the eye of the artist with that of the gardener, and her selections tend not to stray too far from the original. She looks to enhance certain traits, such as extending the flowering season, or changing the flower colour or size. Plants must have height and be of good proportion to have a presence in the garden, traits that are becoming increasingly rare in commercial plant breeding. The extremely popular

To continue turn to page 83

Planting inside the walled garden is predominantly mixed. Plants must have height and be of good proportion to have a presence in the garden, traits that many commercial breeders neglect.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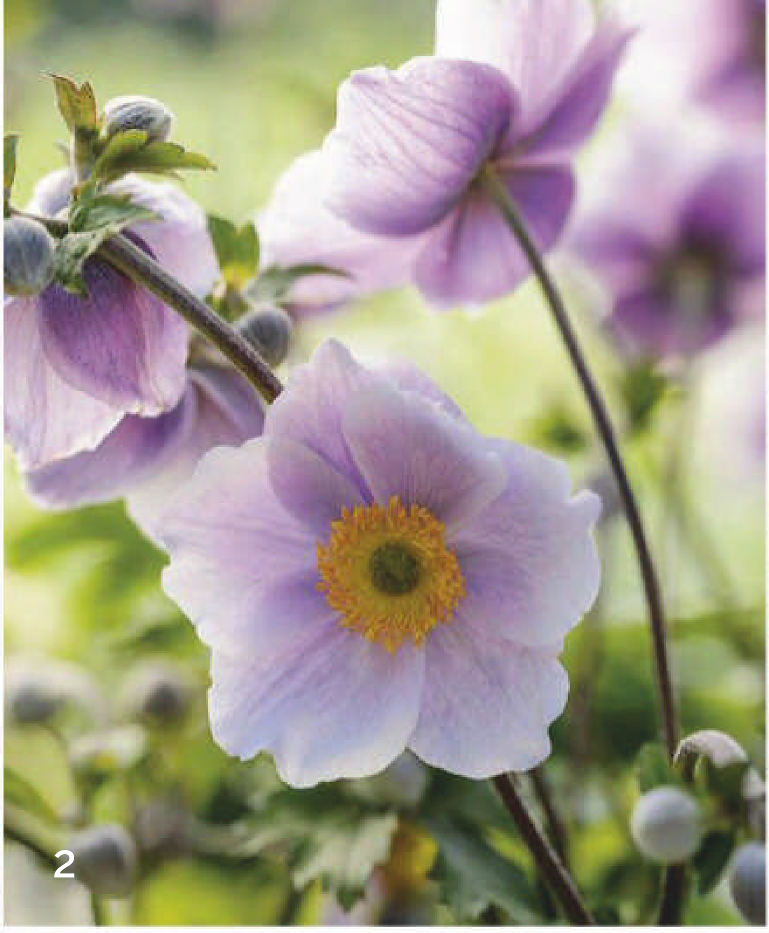
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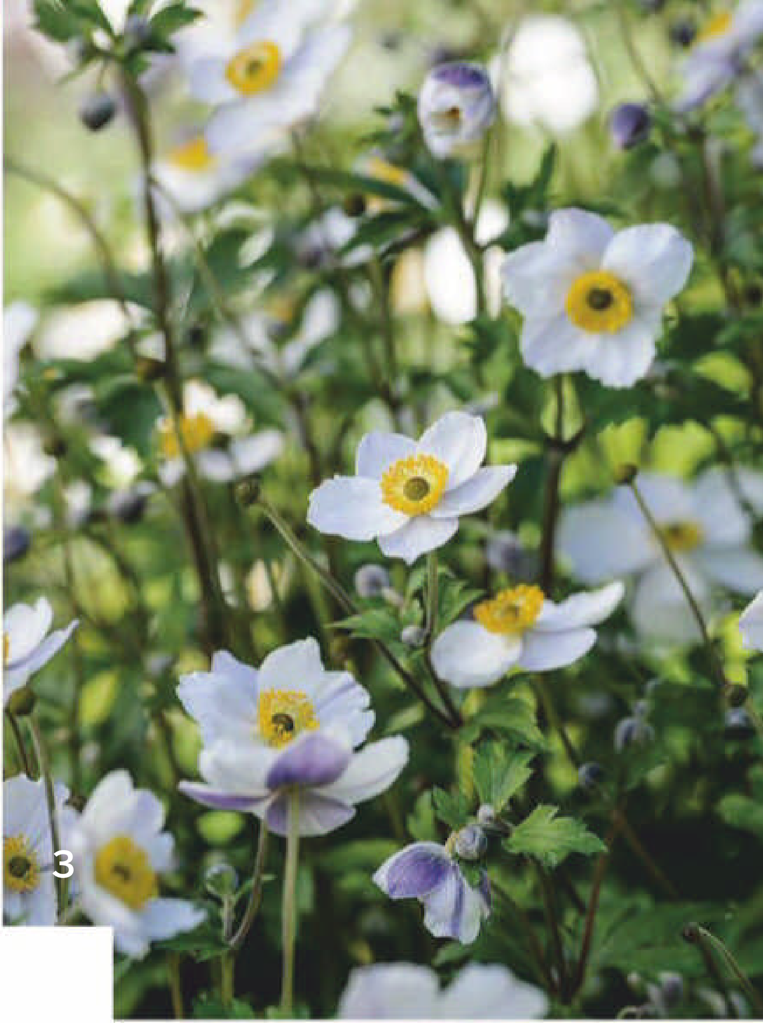
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8 key Elizabeth MacGregor anemones

1 *Anemone* hybrid (= 'Macane025') A new selection with red-and-white banding on the backs of the flowers, reminiscent of *Tulipa clusiana*. Produces masses of flowers from June to September. 60cm. RHS H6†.

2 *Anemone* Blushing Swan (= 'Macane002') A soft-pink, early flowering form from the Swan series. Clump-forming, with an upright habit. Likes a good, well-drained soil, with lots of moisture. 60cm. RHS H6.

3 *Anemone* Elfin Swan (= 'Macane017') A compact cultivar with large, palmate leaves. Masses of white flowers with blue backs are produced on sturdy, upright stems. A good clump-former for rich soils. 50cm. RHS H6.

4 *Anemone* Wild Swan (= 'Macane001') Large, white, cupped flowers, each with blue banding on the backs of the petals. The flowers close at dusk and open in the morning. 60cm. RHS H6.

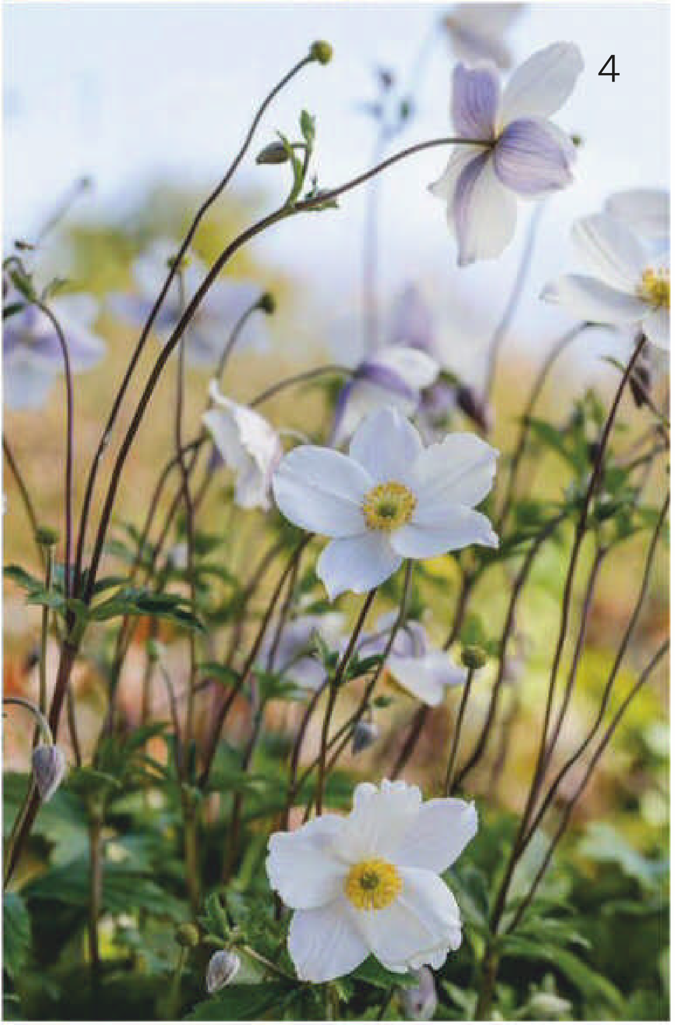
5 *Anemone* Dreaming Swan (= 'Macane004') This unusual, outstanding selection produces single flowers initially, followed by large, semi-double, white blooms with blue backs. Compact and strong-growing. 50cm. RHS H6.

6 *Anemone* Dainty Swan (= 'Macane005') The semi-double flowers are presented on dark, maroon-pink stems and have conspicuous pink banding on the backs of the petals. It makes neat mounds of clean foliage and likes rich, moist soil. 45cm. RHS H6.

7 *Anemone* Ruffled Swan (= 'Macane007') Flowering continuously from mid June to late October, this tall selection has semi-double flowers. Like Wild Swan, it has beautiful white petals with blue backs. 80cm. RHS H4.

8 *Anemone* hybrid (= 'Macane044') A new favourite at Ellenbank, with dark-lavender backs to the flowers. This particular form stands out from the crowd in the stock beds. One to watch out for. 60cm. RHS H6.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.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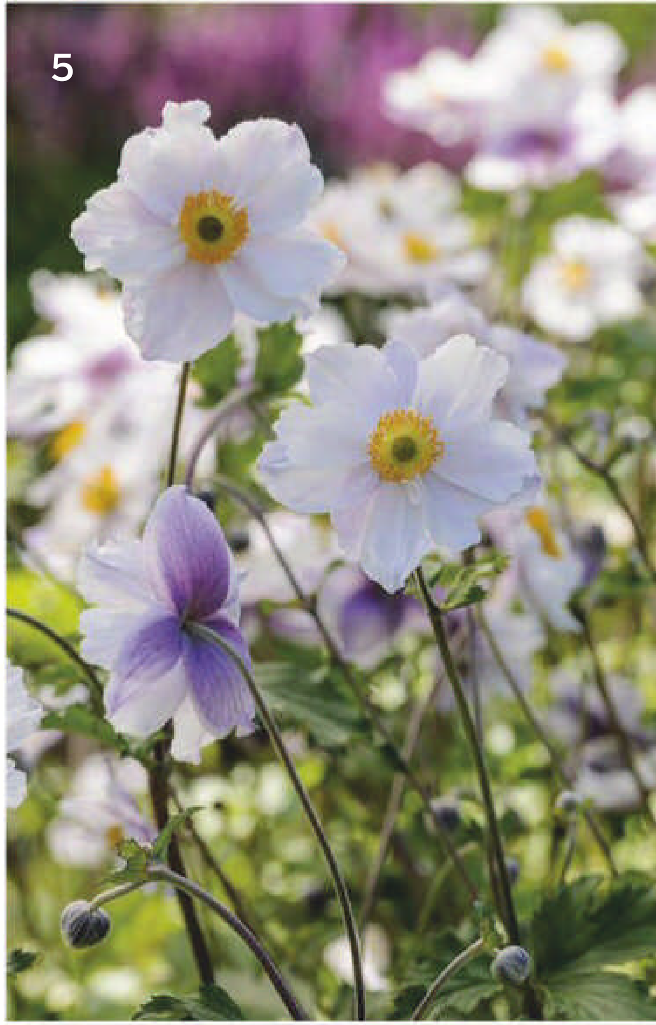
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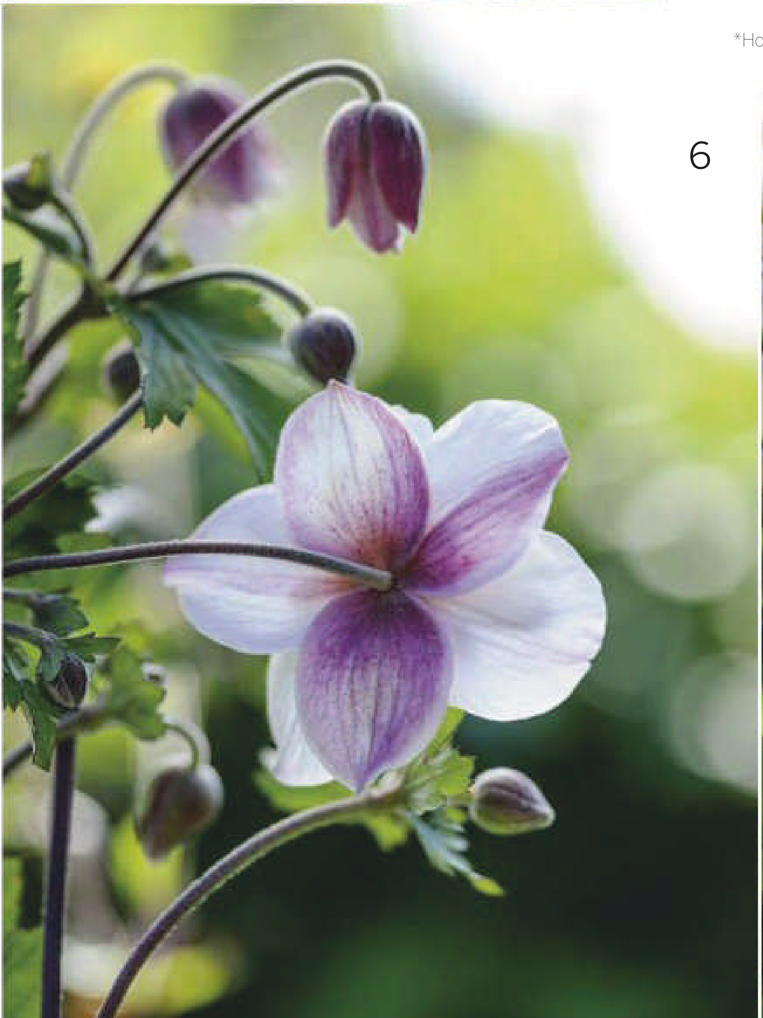
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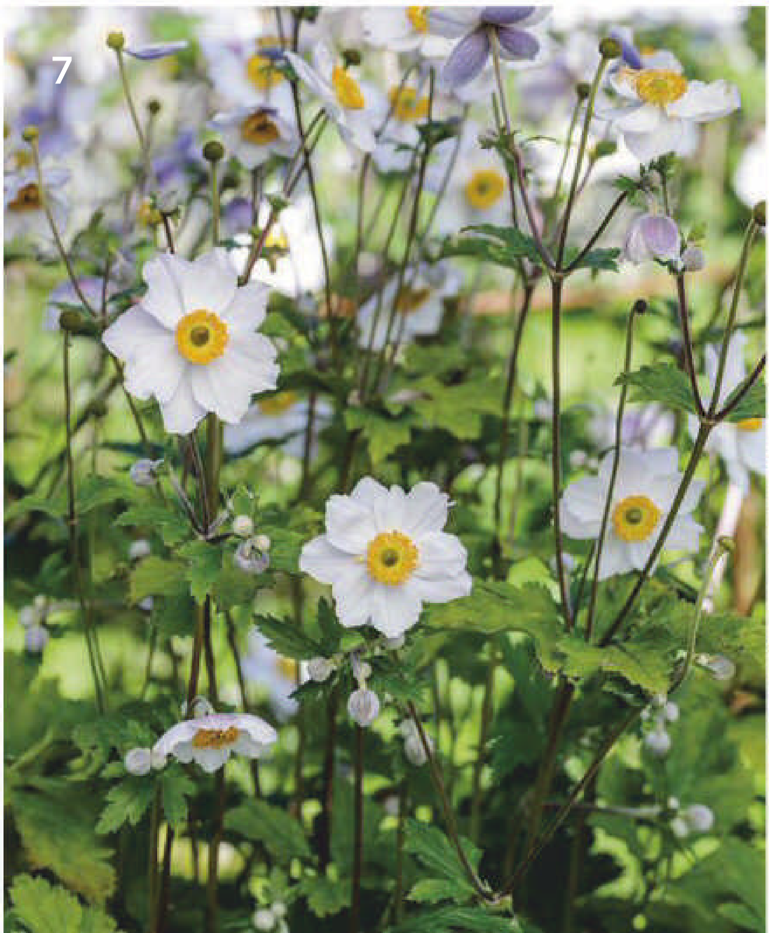
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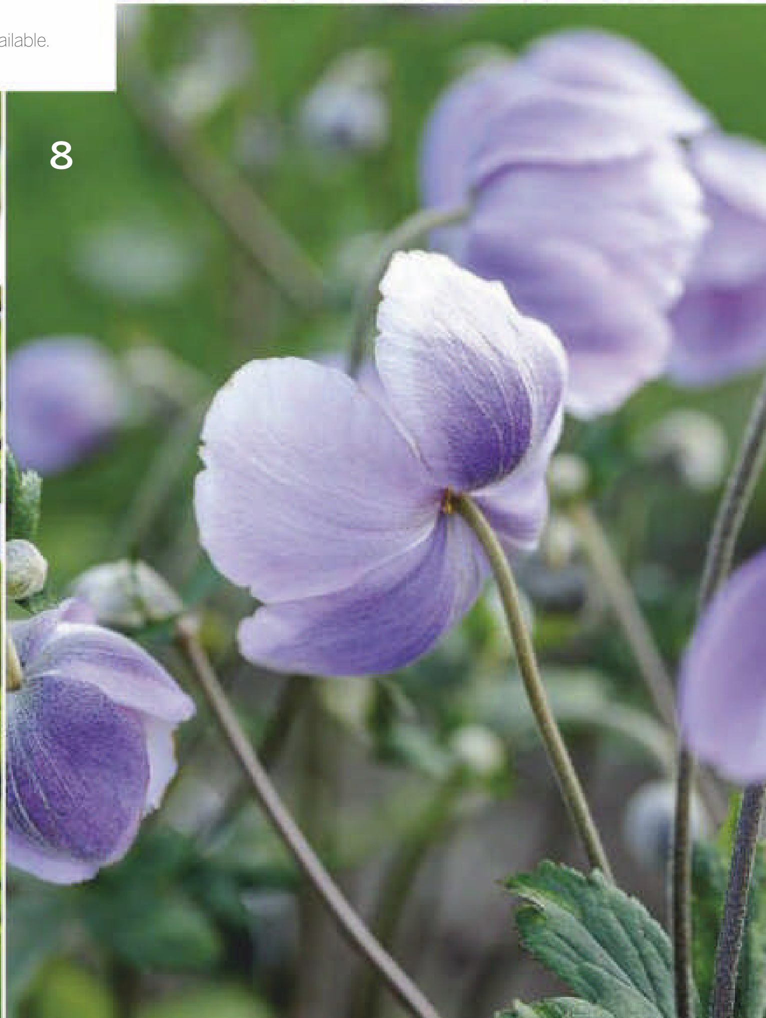
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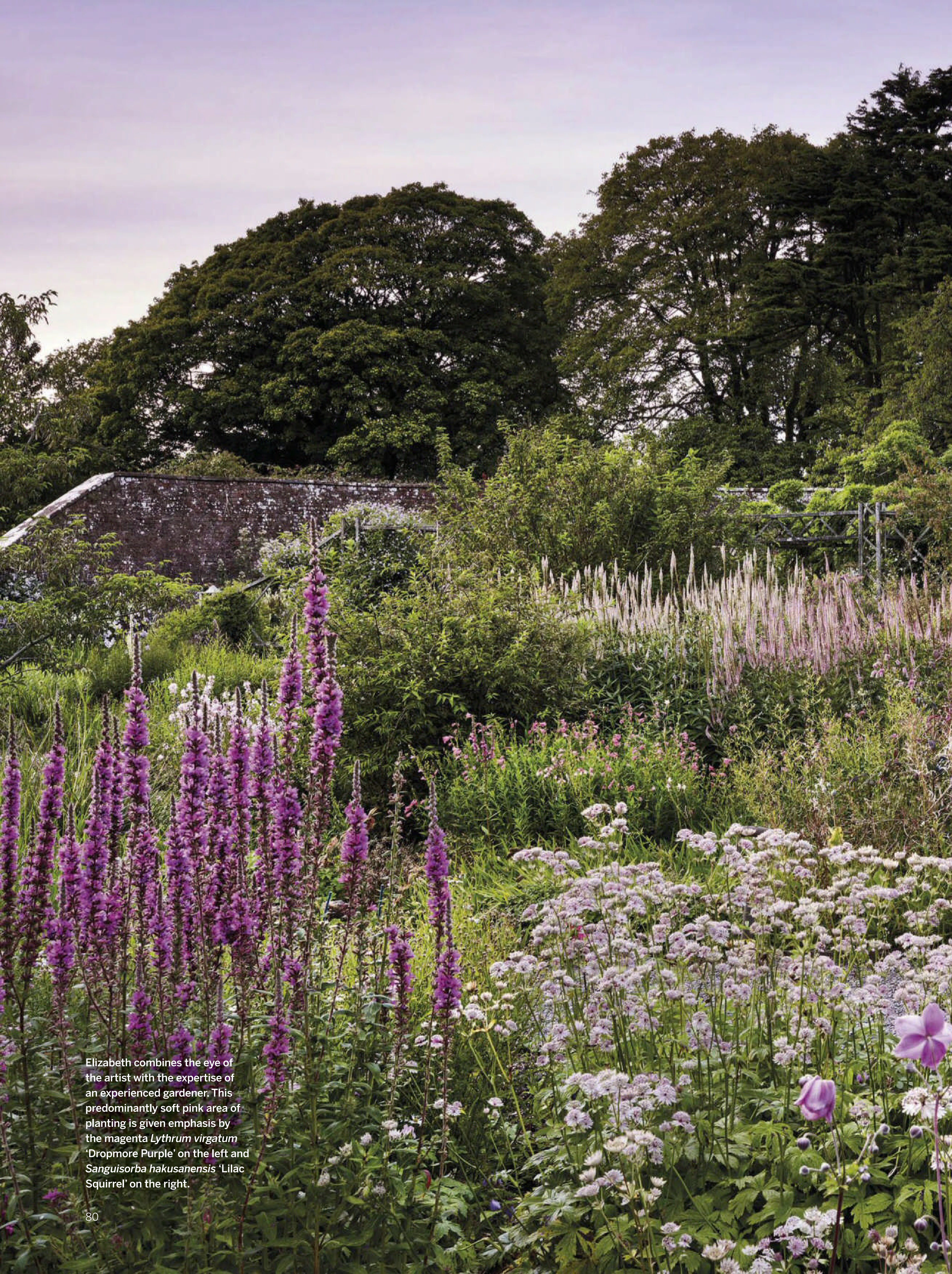
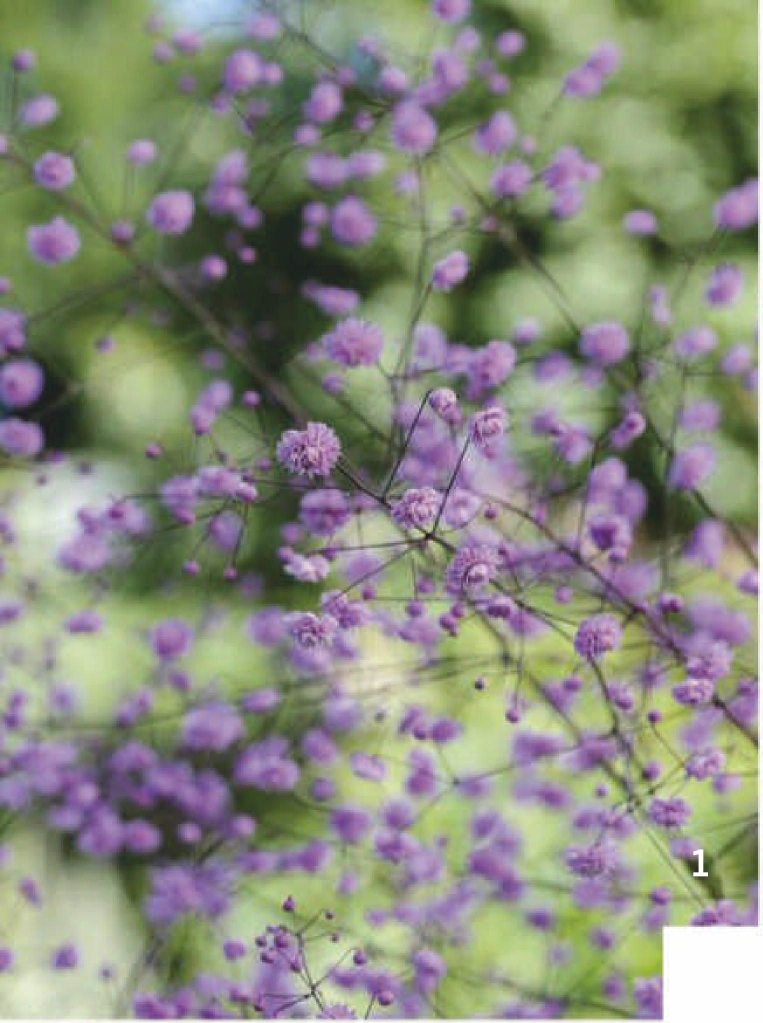


Elizabeth combines the eye of the artist with the expertise of an experienced gardener. This predominantly soft pink area of planting is given emphasis by the magenta *Lythrum virgatum* 'Dropmore Purple' on the left and *Sanguisorba hakusanensis* 'Lilac Squirrel' on the right.

Elizabeth looks to enhance certain traits, such as extending the flowering season or changing the flower colour or size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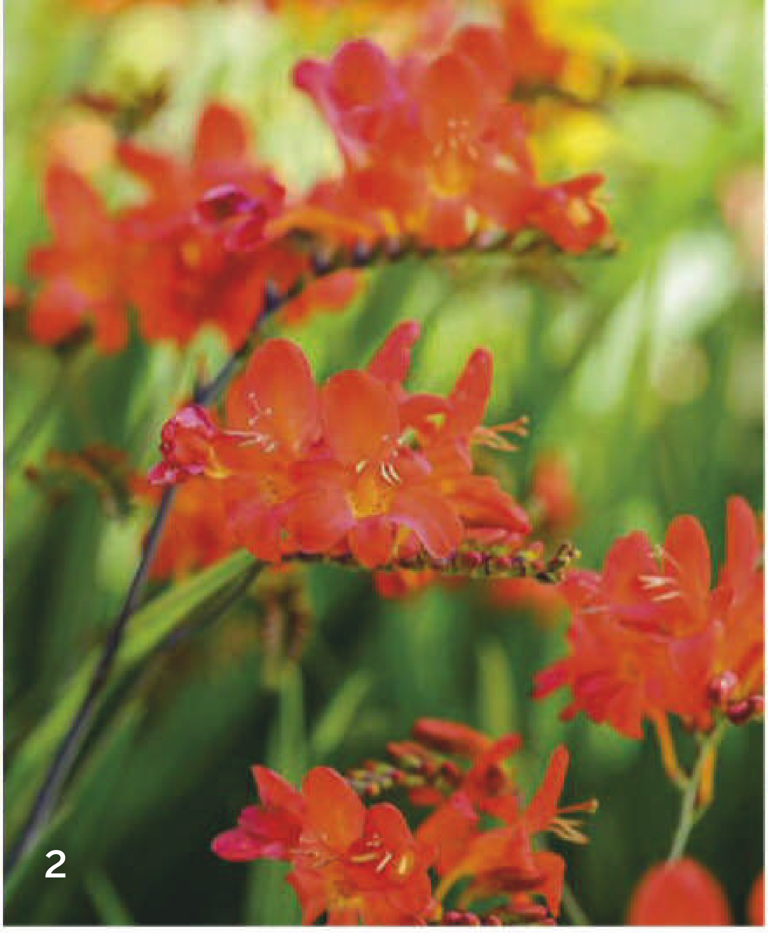
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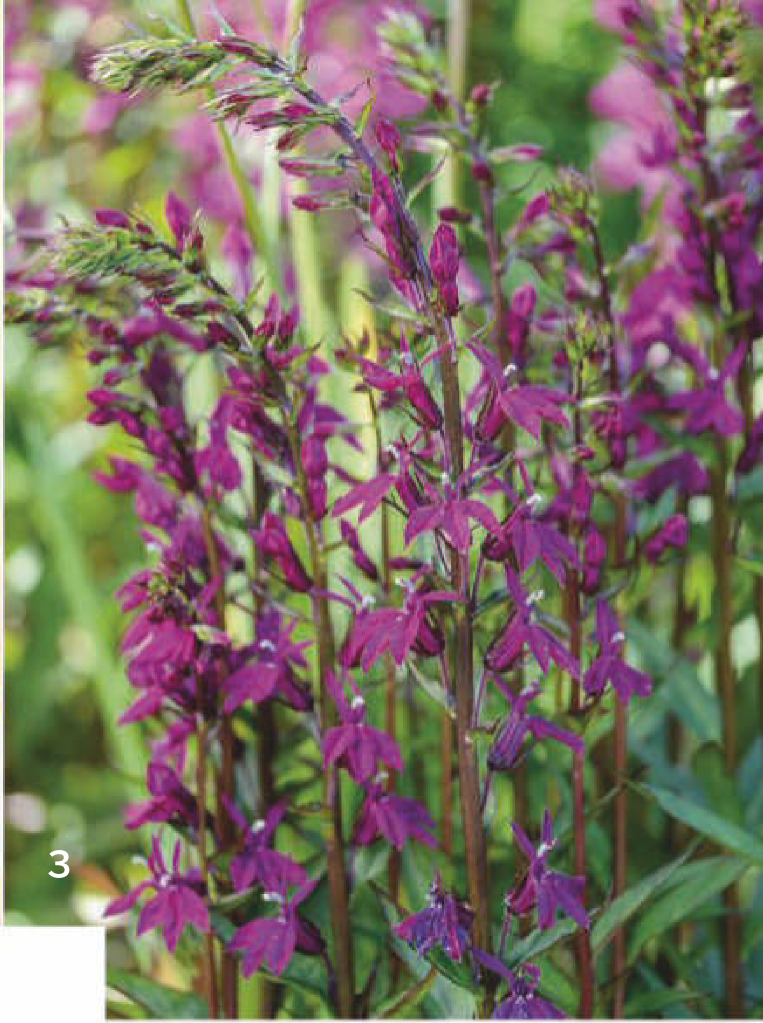
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8 key perennials

1 ***Thalictrum delavayi*** **'Hewitt's Double'** Sprays of mauve, droplet buds opening to tiny, perfect, double flowers. It looks lovely woven through borders linking the plantings. Flowers from July to September, and likes good, moist soil. 1.5m. RHS H7, USDA 4a-7b[†].

2 ***Crocosmia*** **'Limpopo'** Produces large, fiery, orange-red flowers on dark, arching stems held above cool, green, sword-shaped leaves. Either side of flowering, makes a good front-of-border foliage plant. 40-75cm. RHS H5.

3 ***Lobelia* x *speciosa*** **'Tania'** Bright-purple blooms held on slim, maroon spikes above dark, basal foliage. A striking plant when grown well, best in mild, wet gardens. A vigorous grower that responds well to division. 70cm. RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.

4 ***Gladiolus*** **'Ruby'** A sumptuous gladiolus with garnet-coloured flowers. Makes a strong-growing perennial and is more comfortable in the border than some hybrids. 80cm. RHS H4.

5 ***Clematis*** **Princess Kate (= 'Zoprika')** Masses of small, bell-shaped flowers have reflexed petals. Similar appearance to a Turk's cap, blooming on thin stems just proud of the foliage. Throw over a medium shrub, and cut back lightly in the spring. 2m. RHS H5.

6 ***Allium*** **'Millennium'** A tidy, petite, perennial onion, with short stems and dark-lavender flowers. Plant it to edge a path or border, in a sunny position. 30-40cm. RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

7 ***Helenium*** **Mardi Gras (= 'Helbro')** A floriferous selection that makes a thick mat of vibrant-red and singed-yellow flowers, with a brunette central cone. Produces flowers into the autumn. 1m. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

8 ***Lythrum virgatum*** **'Dropmore Purple'** A strong-growing perennial that favours rich, wet soils, but will easily manage in drier sites. Masses of slim, purple spires with small, spidery flowers on strong stems. 1m. RHS H6.

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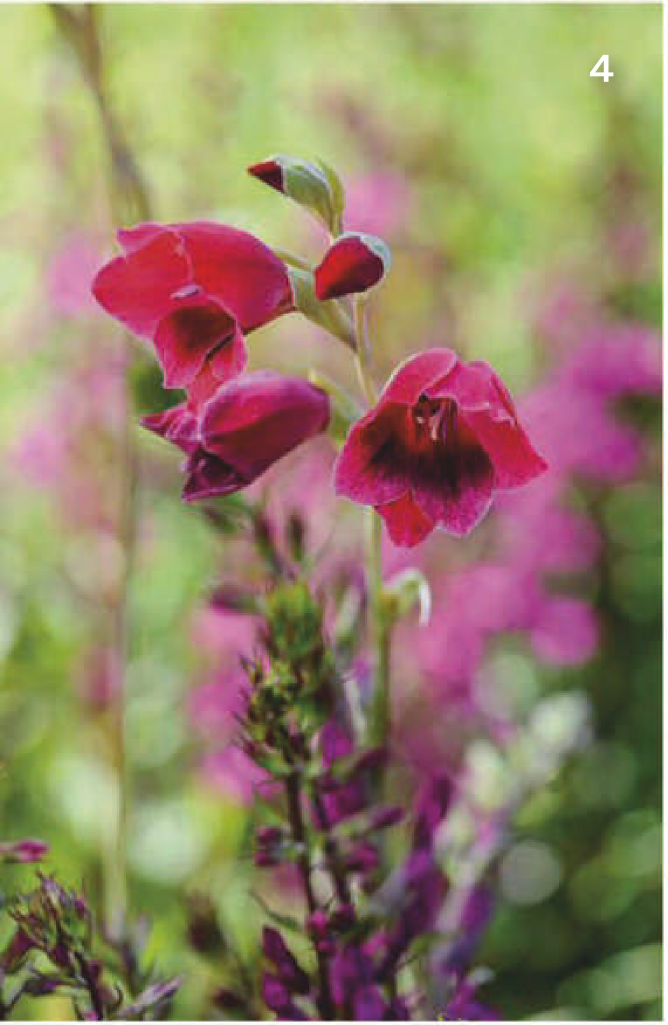
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. [†] Hardiness ratings given where available.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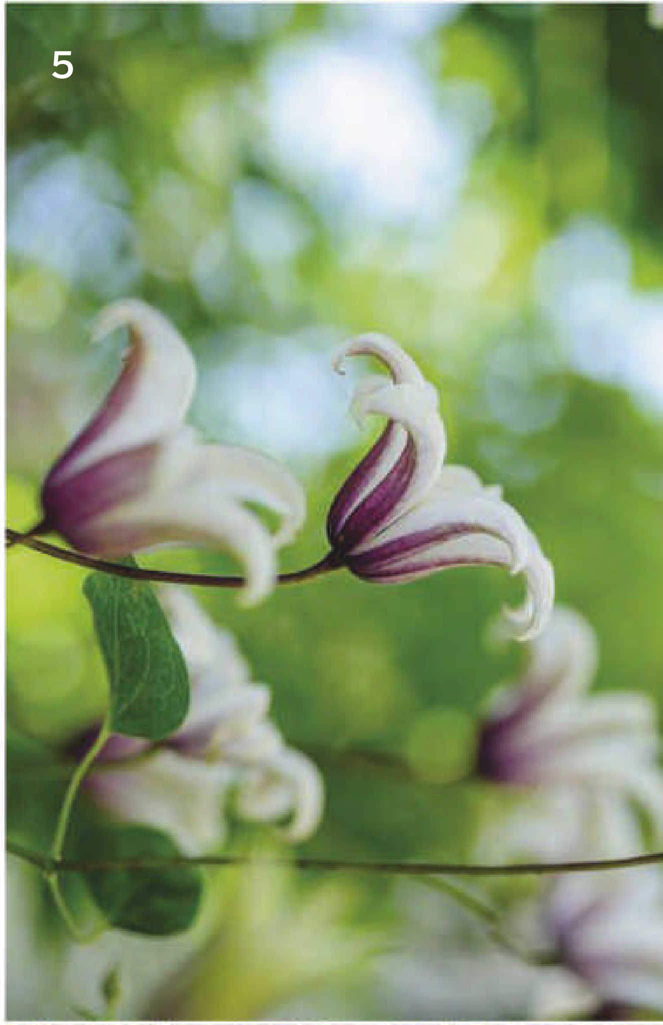
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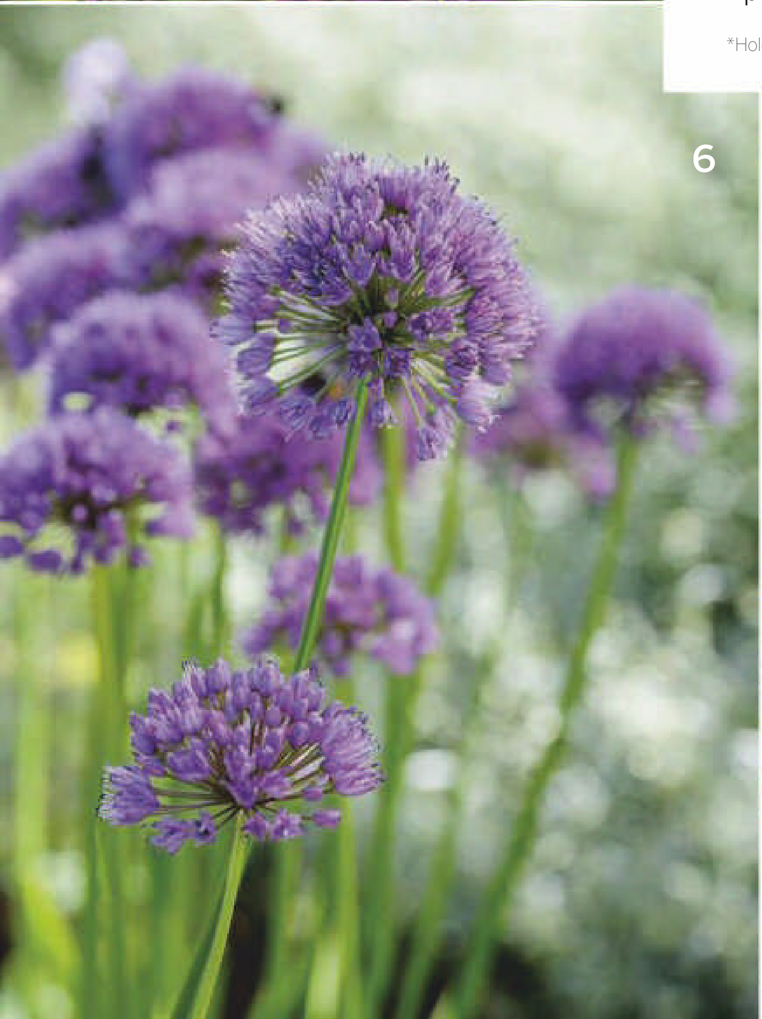
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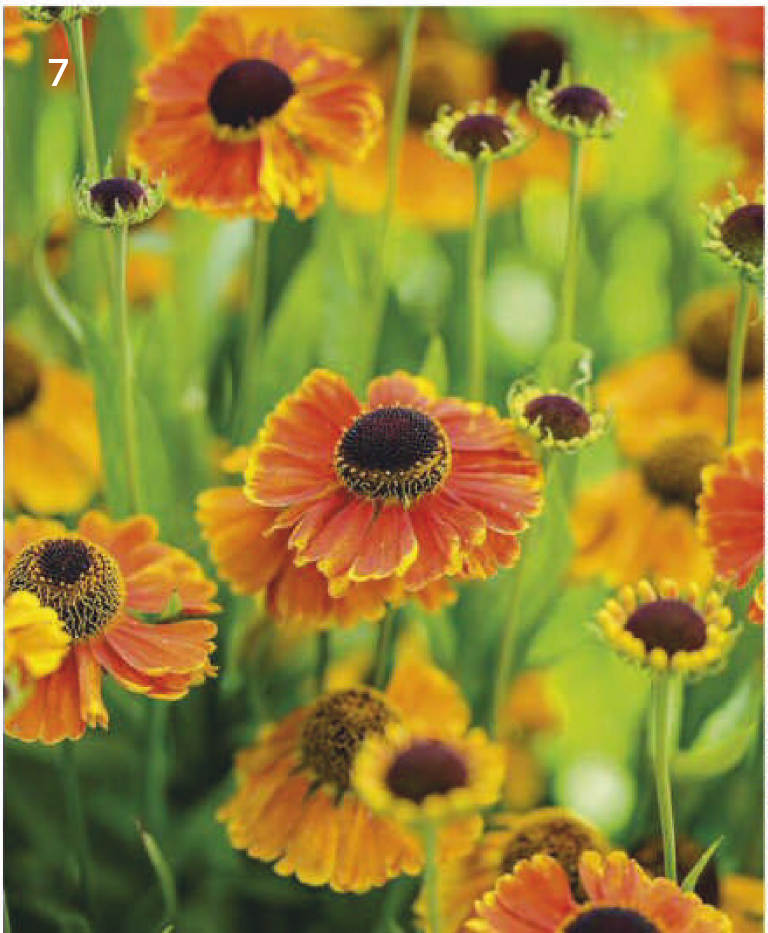
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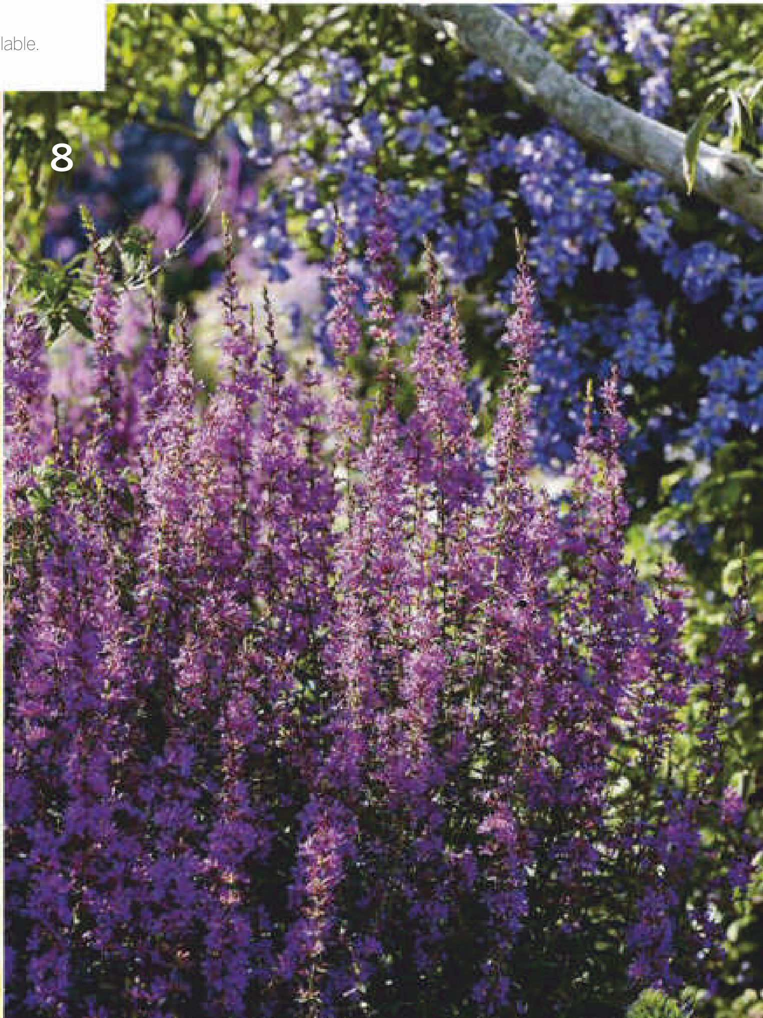
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▷ Swan series of anemones are wonderful examples of the horticultural gems coming from Ellenbank. *Anemone* Wild Swan (= 'Macane001') was the first in the series, a happenchance seedling Elizabeth selected from among a pot of others more than 15 years ago. Initially released in 2005, with the encouragement of celebrated plantsman Roy Lancaster, it proved very difficult to propagate in large numbers at Ellenbank. Eventually propagation was accomplished with tissue culture and *A.* Wild Swan was made widely available. In 2011, it was shown to great acclaim at RHS Chelsea Flower Show where it was awarded Chelsea 2011 Plant of the Year.

The Swans now have an avid following and Elizabeth has continued breeding new forms, many of which are tested in the stock beds below the nursery. This series combines the vigour and height of *Anemone* x *hybrida*, with the clump-forming habit of *Anemone rupicola*. They do particularly well in cooler, western gardens where they make lush colonies of elegant, long-flowering, white and blue blooms. The clump-forming habit makes them more suitable for smaller gardens than the larger, spreading, Japanese types. Violets, geums and thalictrums are also included in the breeding programme, with *Geum* Scarlet Tempest (= 'Macgeu001') achieving runner-up for Chelsea Plant of the Year in 2016.

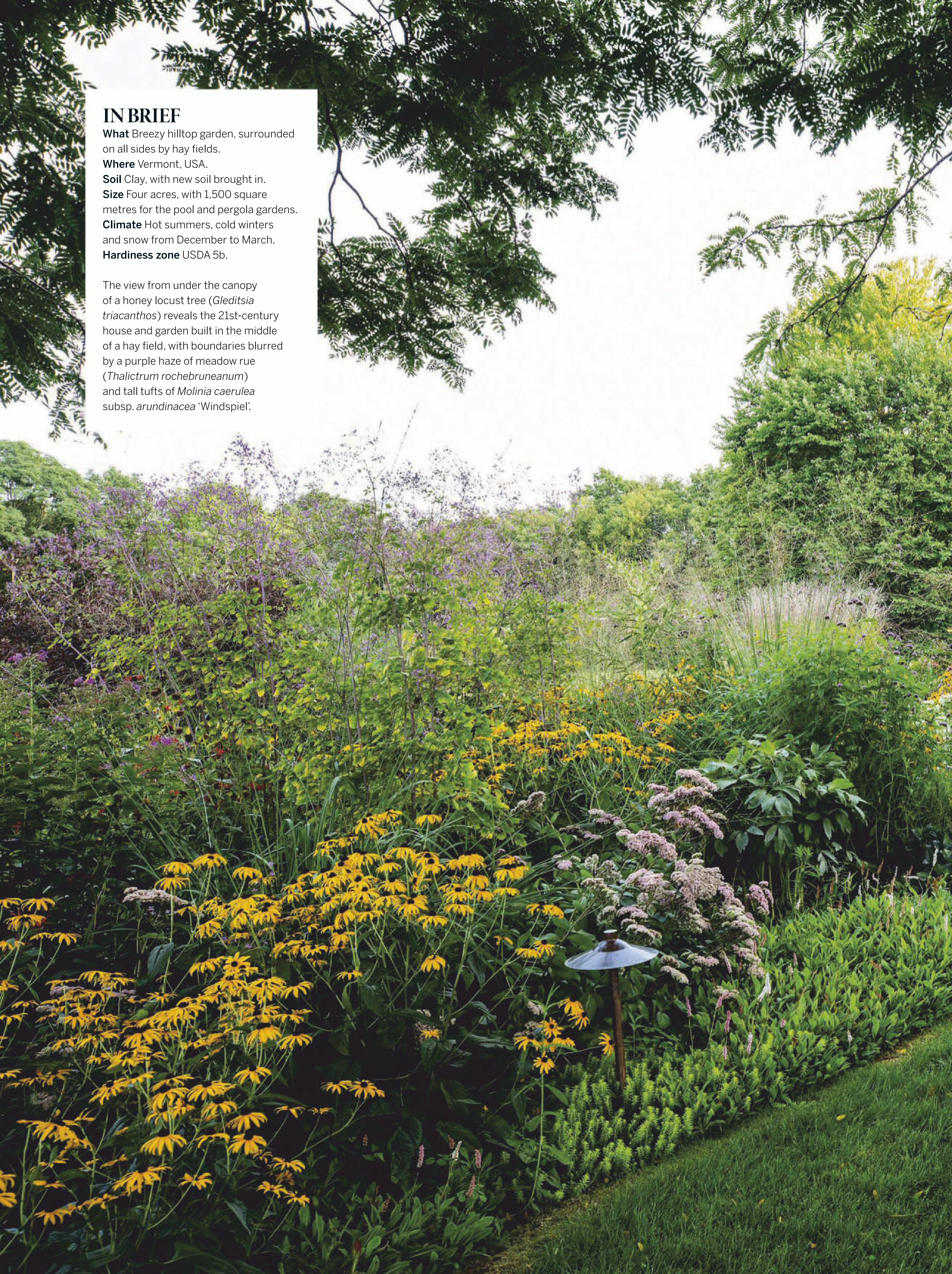
Visitors to Elizabeth MacGregor Nursery will find a carefully curated range of both old and new varieties of herbaceous plants with many of Elizabeth's selections offered for sale. There is a large collection of perennial violets, mostly the lovely *Viola cornuta* types, which make a wonderful scrambling understorey and are great for clothing the knobbly legs of roses. An attractive selection from Elizabeth is the strongly scented *Viola* 'Butterpat', which was derived from *V.* 'Pat Kavanagh'. The flowers are a glowing shade of yellow, with subtle dark whiskers and a violet spur.

Beds of Swan anemones greet visitors at the entrance to the walled garden, beyond which the planting is predominantly mixed. It is a great place to see many of the perennials offered for sale at the nursery, and if you're lucky you may even find some of Elizabeth's original *Clematis viticella* hybrids from all those years ago. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Elizabeth MacGregor Nursery, Ellenbank, Tongland Road, Kirkcudbright, Dumfries and Galloway DG6 4UU.
Tel 01557 330620. **Web** elizabethmacgregornursery.co.uk
Open From the last weekend in April until first weekend in October (closed Thursday and Sunday).

The nursery produces a new catalogue each autumn, when Elizabeth knows what they have propagated and what will be available for the following spring Orders are usually sent out from March to early May.



IN BRIEF

What Breezy hilltop garden, surrounded on all sides by hay fields.
Where Vermont, USA.
Soil Clay, with new soil brought in.
Size Four acres, with 1,500 square metres for the pool and pergola gardens.
Climate Hot summers, cold winters and snow from December to March.
Hardiness zone USDA 5b.

The view from under the canopy of a honey locust tree (*Gleditsia triacanthos*) reveals the 21st-century house and garden built in the middle of a hay field, with boundaries blurred by a purple haze of meadow rue (*Thalictrum rochebruneanum*) and tall tufts of *Molinia caerulea* subsp. *arundinacea* 'Windspiel'.

Companion planting

A garden in northeastern USA is as much guided by the habits of its plants as it is by the collaborative efforts of designer, co-worker and client

WORDS **KENDRA WILSON** PHOTOGRAPHS **CLAIRE TAKACS**

Helen O'Donnell would have you believe that she is not really a designer; she just grows and sells interesting plants, some of which she places in other people's gardens. "A lot of people who know me as a grower don't know me as a designer," she says. "I'm shy about that part of me." Of this property, half a mile from her nursery at Bunker Farm in southern Vermont, Helen suggests that she takes care of it, before admitting that she designed all of it. She emphasises that even though she has grown most of the plants introduced around this rural property over the past seven years, the creativity is very much a group effort, with her co-gardener Laurie Merrigan and her client, Rita Ramirez.

The house where Rita lives, with her husband Tom Bodett, is in the middle of a hay field, surrounded by further hay fields and woods. With views over distant hills, the site is pleasantly breezy without being too windy. Back in 2009, Helen had helped to plant the area by the pergola, under the guidance of Siena MacFarland. Over the next four years, everything changed: the planting was dug up and stored in the woods (to make way for a series of pools in the garden), and Siena moved away. Before eventually taking over, Helen had spent two separate months living and working at Great Dixter, meanwhile acquiring a large farm with her sister and their respective husbands.

The farm is collaborative and so is this garden. Anyone who has visited Great Dixter on a weekday will have seen the head gardener Fergus Garrett moving around the borders with groups of students, in deep discussion. Helen's co-gardener Laurie is also a Dixter alumna, and with Rita they continue this spirit of debate and inquiry. "During the growing season, we meet weekly to talk, garden and plan," says Rita. "I'm selfish about our gardening days; gardening like this has become one of my greatest joys."

Refreshingly, the words 'low maintenance' have never been on the agenda. With the exception of three months of unmoving snow, Helen and Laurie each spend four hours a week in the borders, which also benefit from Rita's considerable attention. For Helen, whose expertise as a grower is focused mainly on unusual annuals, Rita's garden is the perfect setting for strange and unproven plants: "Rita is incredibly adventurous," says Helen. "She is happy to help me trial plants, and just see what comes." For keen gardeners in New England, Helen's nursery is in turn a precious resource, since raising a good range of plants from seed is an uncommon pursuit.

Helen had a light-bulb moment in the potting shed at Great Dixter: "You'd be sowing seeds for things that would be put in the borders a year-and-a-half later. That was a revelation for me – that you could just grow all these plants," she says. "I realised that I wasn't at the mercy of what I could buy locally." In Rita's garden, Helen uses many American natives (such as *Amaranthus cruentus* 'Hopi Red Dye'), mixed with more tropical and exotic plants (*Hibiscus acetosella* 'Mahogany Splendor', *Ricinus communis* 'Zanzibariensis'). In the Great Dixter manner, she and her collaborators allow the garden to be directed and shaped by plant behaviour. "It has a wild look but a lot of detail goes into keeping it that way."

The garden is a changing picture: "Rudbeckia runs right through like a river. There was originally one tenth of the amount and it needs controlling but I love how it looks in high summer, with all the pinks and purples," says Helen. Echinacea, another native, tends to ebb and flow. "We don't need the same plants in the same spot every year; echinacea will move out of the borders and into the path. We're always corralling, but rarely fighting, these processes." Similarly, the garden's eco-system is respected: "Plants have good and bad years, as do various bugs." Pests are picked off by hand; a bacteria that attacks Japanese beetle larvae, called milky spore, is also used.

In a garden of views both near and far, a certain transparency was required for the taller planting. *Thalictrum rochebruneanum* is paired with *Molinia caerulea* subsp. *arundinacea* 'Windspiel', both of which survive the harsh winters. Annuals such as *Cleome hassleriana* 'Rose Queen' and 'Pink Queen' reappear in a weaker form in spring, to which Helen adds sturdier nursery-grown plants; self-sown and nurtured cultivars grow together. This community spirit extends to the ponds above the swimming pool that teem with frogs and birds. "We discuss where to plant certain shrubs, such as *Itea virginica*, as landing places and food sources for birds."

At Bunker Farm, where Helen raises animals as well as plants, the concept of 'design' is perhaps a bit abstract, even though it is part of her toolkit. "I never want to be just a designer," she says. "I want to have my hands in the dirt. If I didn't have gardens to experiment with, I wouldn't grow as a gardener or as a grower. It all works together." □

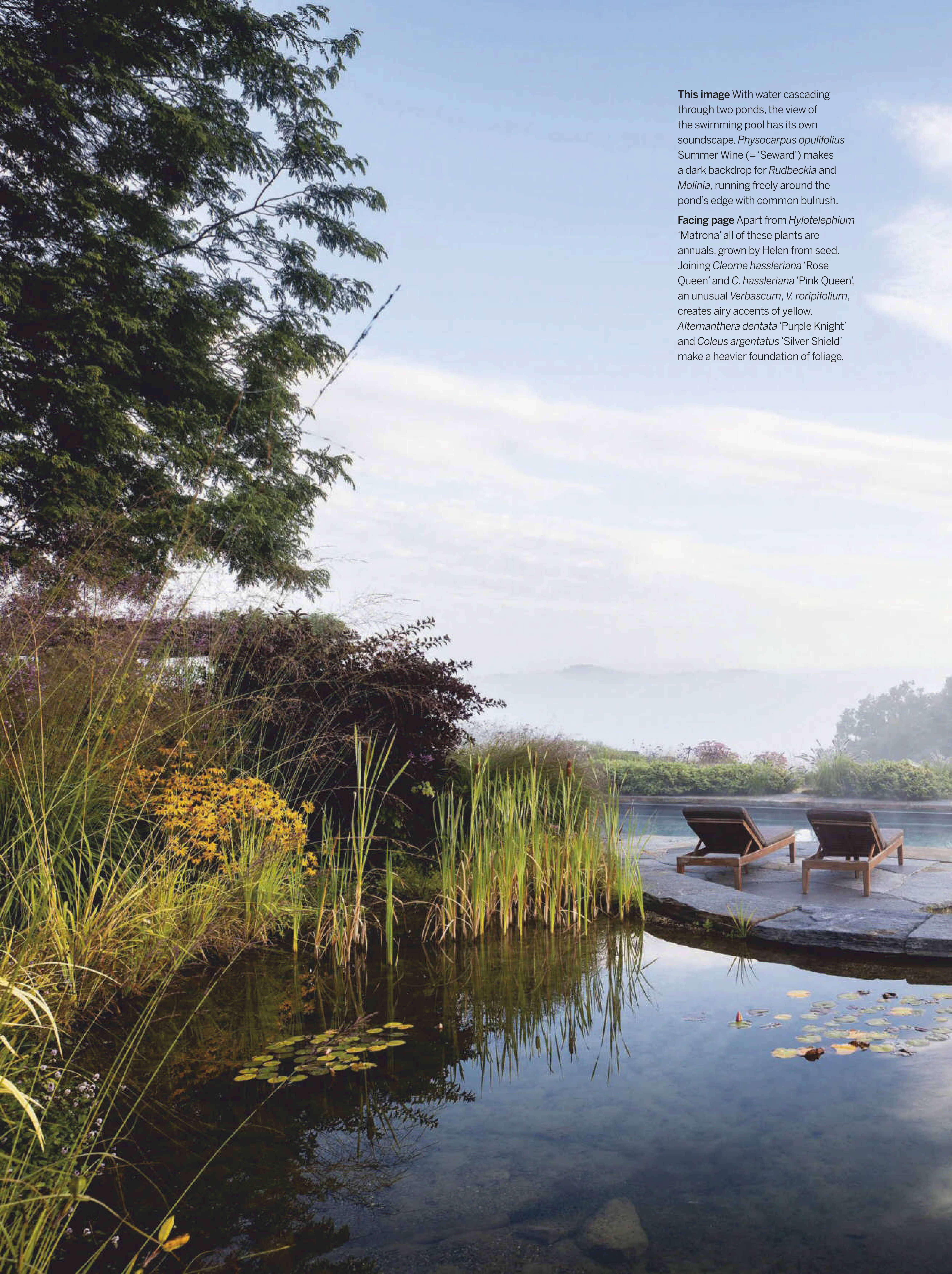
USEFUL INFORMATION
Address The Bunker Farm, 857 Bunker Road, Dummerston, Vermont 05346, USA.
Tel +1 802 387 0223. **Web** thebunkerfarm.com **Open** Helen's nursery is open for self-service.
Please email to check opening times: thebunkerfarm@gmail.com

Turn to page to see more of Rita's garden and 12 key plants

Facing page

Above *Pennisetum alopecuroides* contrasts with the pea-like foliage of *Indigofera kirilowii*, introduced by Helen's client, Rita. The Joe Pye weed (*Eupatorium maculatum*) by the pond self-seeds freely and is reined in Helen and co-gardener Laurie.

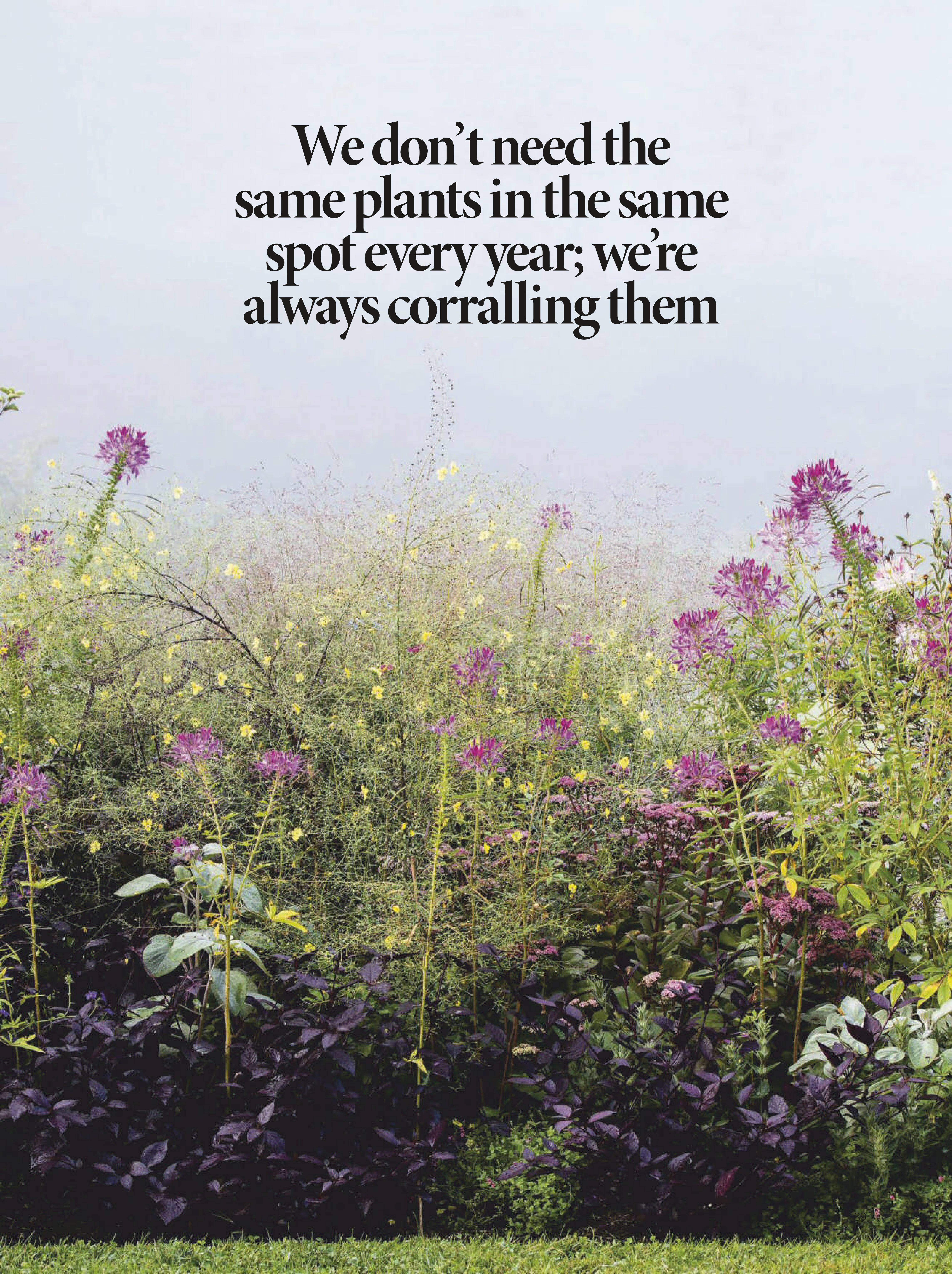
Below Looking north towards Vermont's hills, a stout pergola presides over a stone terrace planted with three *Wisteria frutescens* 'Amethyst Falls' and a more vigorous *Wisteria sinensis*. *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *sullivantii* 'Goldsturm' runs through the foreground.

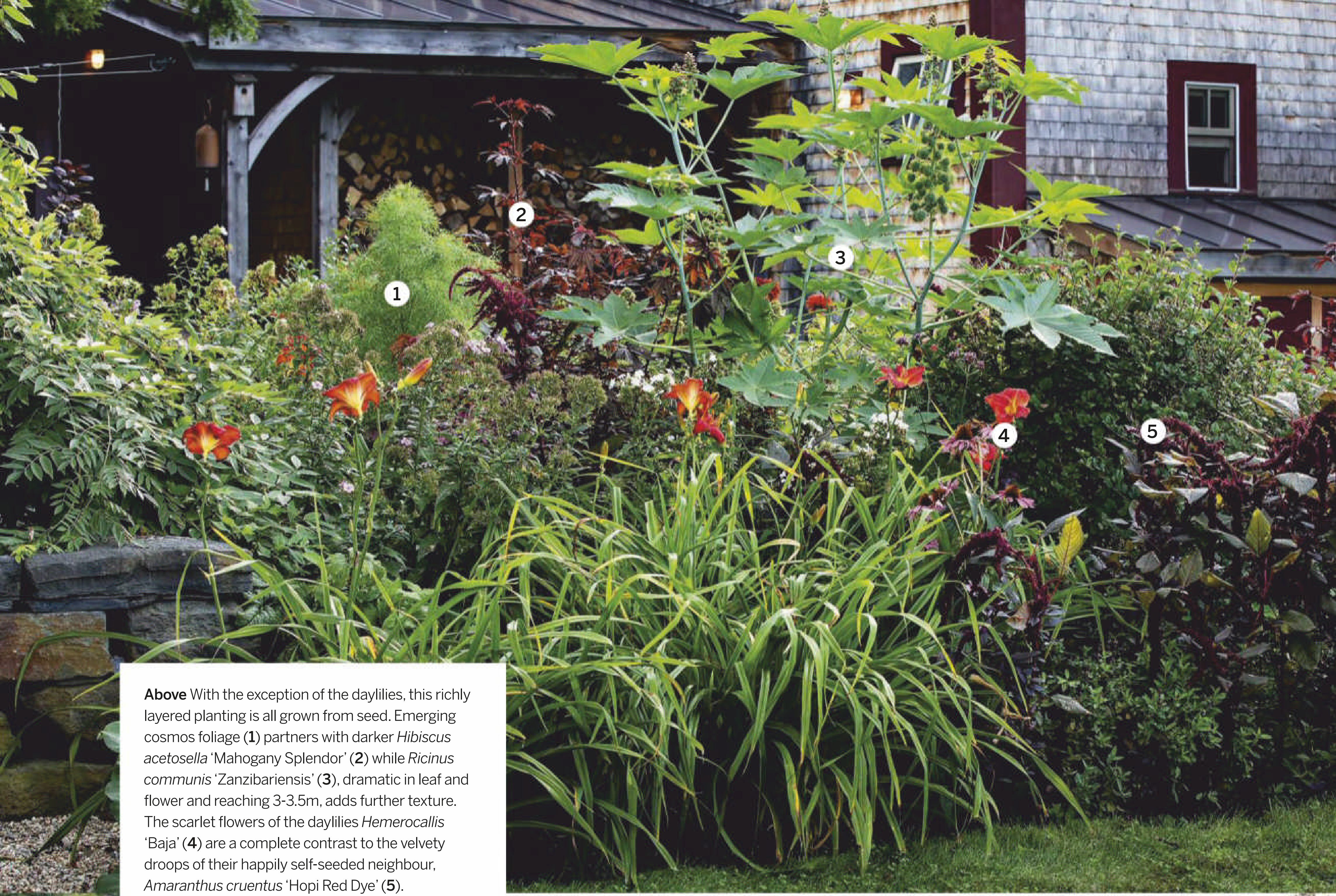


This image With water cascading through two ponds, the view of the swimming pool has its own soundscape. *Physocarpus opulifolius* Summer Wine (= 'Seward') makes a dark backdrop for *Rudbeckia* and *Molinia*, running freely around the pond's edge with common bulrush.

Facing page Apart from *Hylotelephium* 'Matrona' all of these plants are annuals, grown by Helen from seed. Joining *Cleome hassleriana* 'Rose Queen' and *C. hassleriana* 'Pink Queen', an unusual *Verbascum*, *V. roripifolium*, creates airy accents of yellow. *Alternanthera dentata* 'Purple Knight' and *Coleus argentatus* 'Silver Shield' make a heavier foundation of foliage.

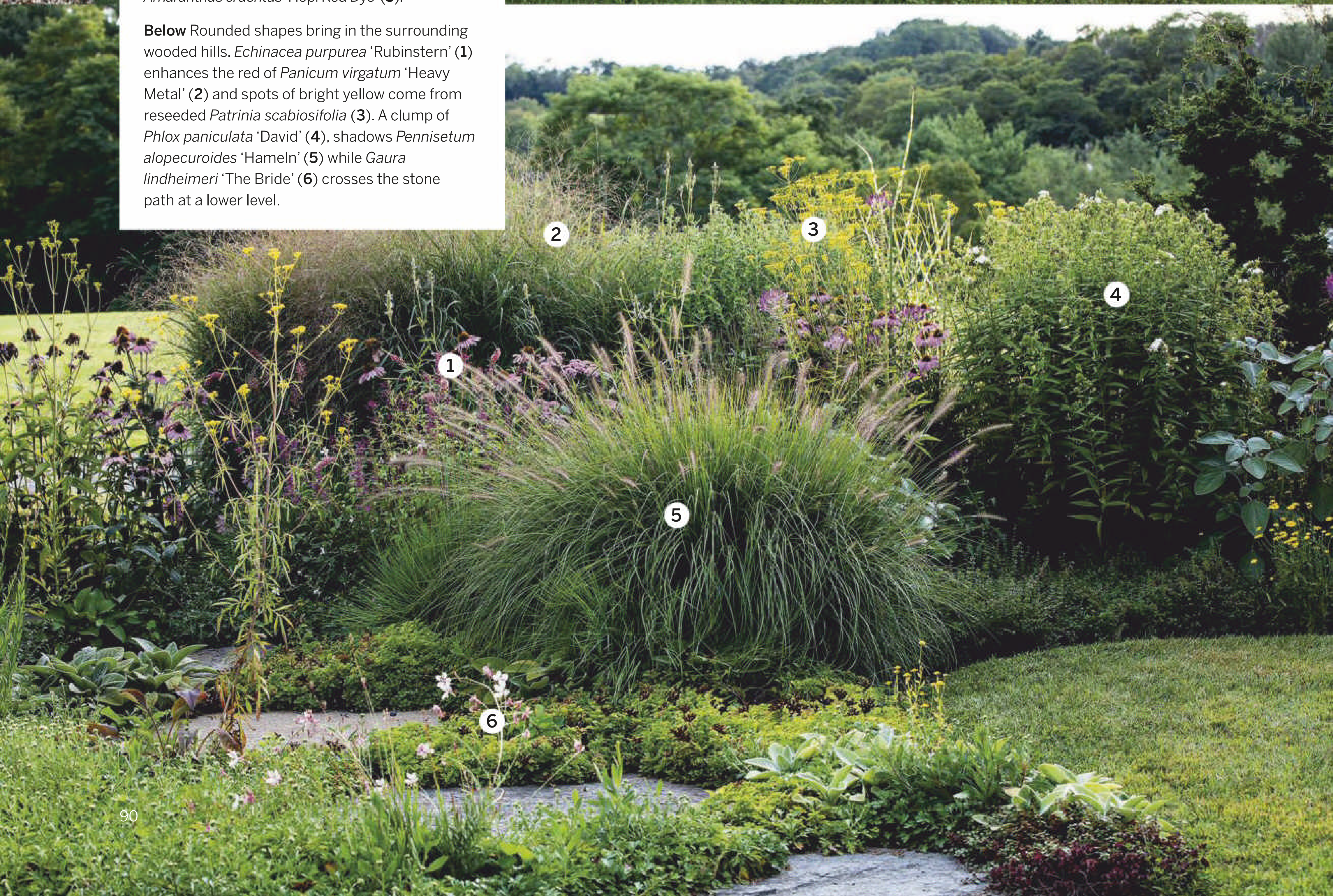
> We don’t need the same plants in the same spot every year; we’re always corralling them

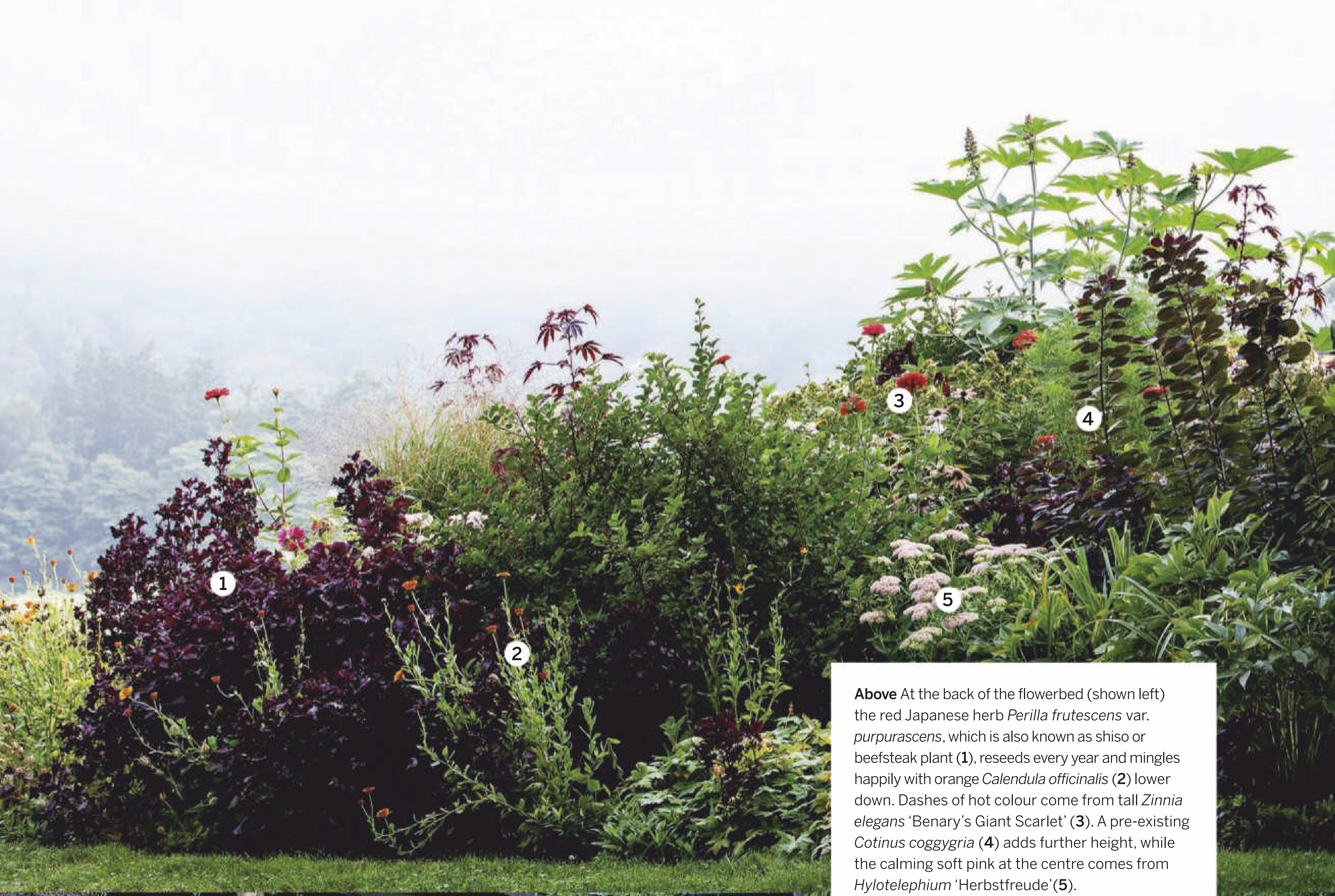


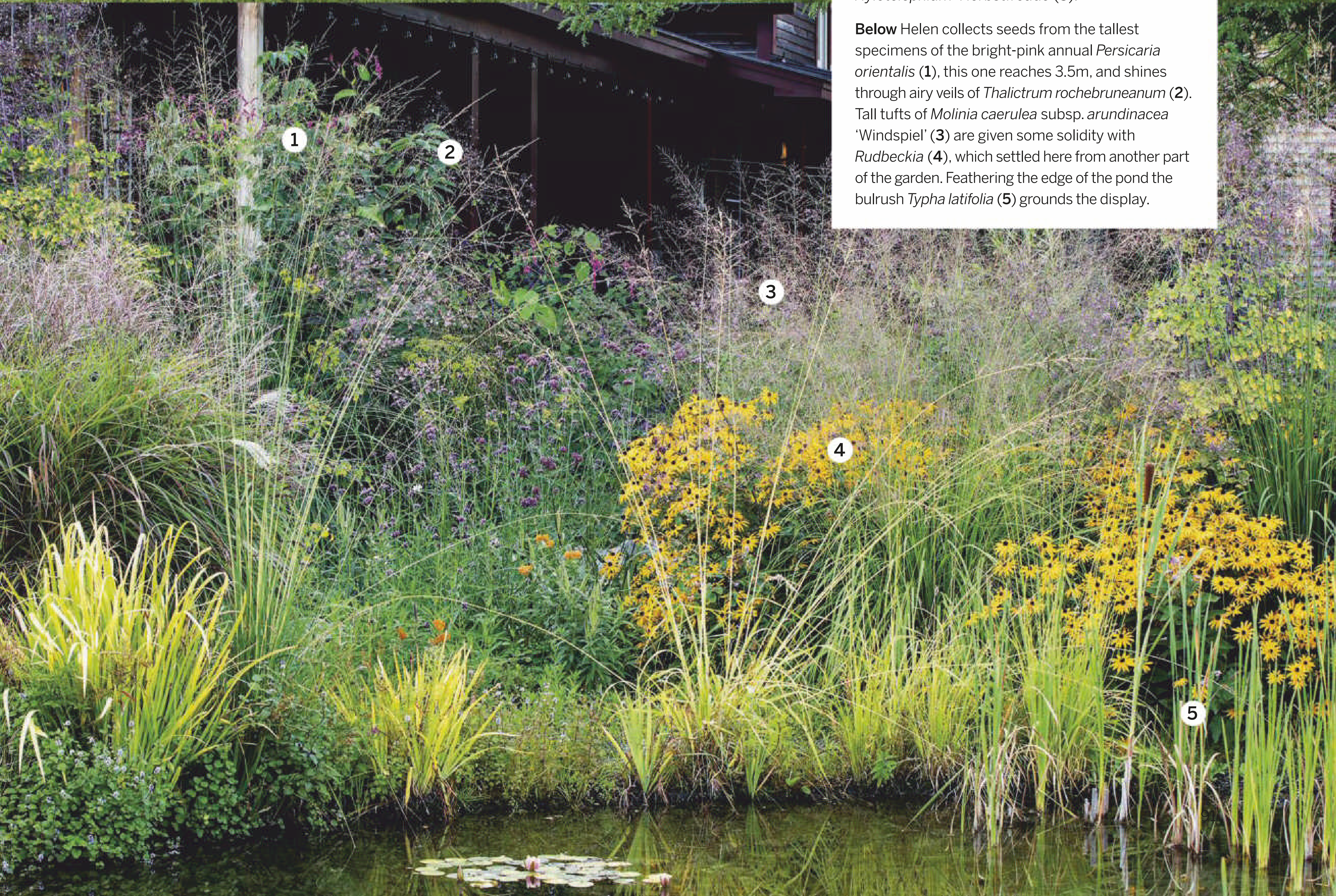


Above With the exception of the daylilies, this richly layered planting is all grown from seed. Emerging cosmos foliage (**1**) partners with darker *Hibiscus acetosella* 'Mahogany Splendor' (**2**) while *Ricinus communis* 'Zanzibariensis' (**3**), dramatic in leaf and flower and reaching 3-3.5m, adds further texture. The scarlet flowers of the daylilies *Hemerocallis* 'Baja' (**4**) are a complete contrast to the velvety droops of their happily self-seeded neighbour, *Amaranthus cruentus* 'Hopi Red Dye' (**5**).

Below Rounded shapes bring in the surrounding wooded hills. *Echinacea purpurea* 'Rubinstern' (**1**) enhances the red of *Panicum virgatum* 'Heavy Metal' (**2**) and spots of bright yellow come from reseeded *Patrinia scabiosifolia* (**3**). A clump of *Phlox paniculata* 'David' (**4**), shadows *Pennisetum alopecuroides* 'Hameln' (**5**) while *Gaura lindheimeri* 'The Bride' (**6**) crosses the stone path at a lower level.







Above At the back of the flowerbed (shown left) the red Japanese herb *Perilla frutescens* var. *purpurascens*, which is also known as shiso or beefsteak plant (**1**), reseeds every year and mingles happily with orange *Calendula officinalis* (**2**) lower down. Dashes of hot colour come from tall *Zinnia elegans* 'Benary's Giant Scarlet' (**3**). A pre-existing *Cotinus coggygria* (**4**) adds further height, while the calming soft pink at the centre comes from *Hylotelephium* 'Herbstfreude'(**5**).

Below Helen collects seeds from the tallest specimens of the bright-pink annual *Persicaria orientalis* (**1**), this one reaches 3.5m, and shines through airy veils of *Thalictrum rochebruneanum* (**2**). Tall tufts of *Molinia caerulea* subsp. *arundinacea* 'Windspiel' (**3**) are given some solidity with *Rudbeckia* (**4**), which settled here from another part of the garden. Feathering the edge of the pond the bulrush *Typha latifolia* (**5**) grounds the display.

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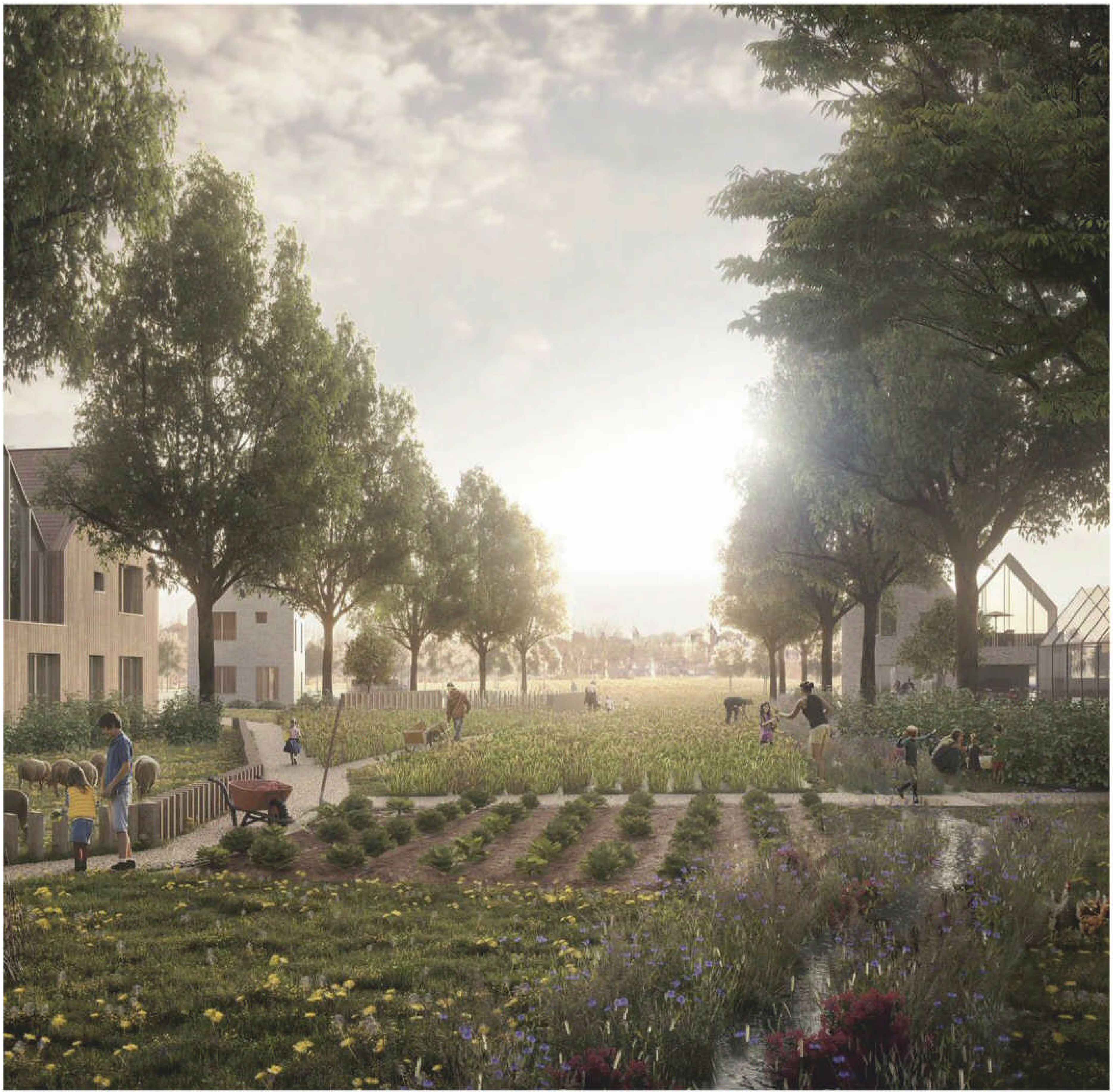


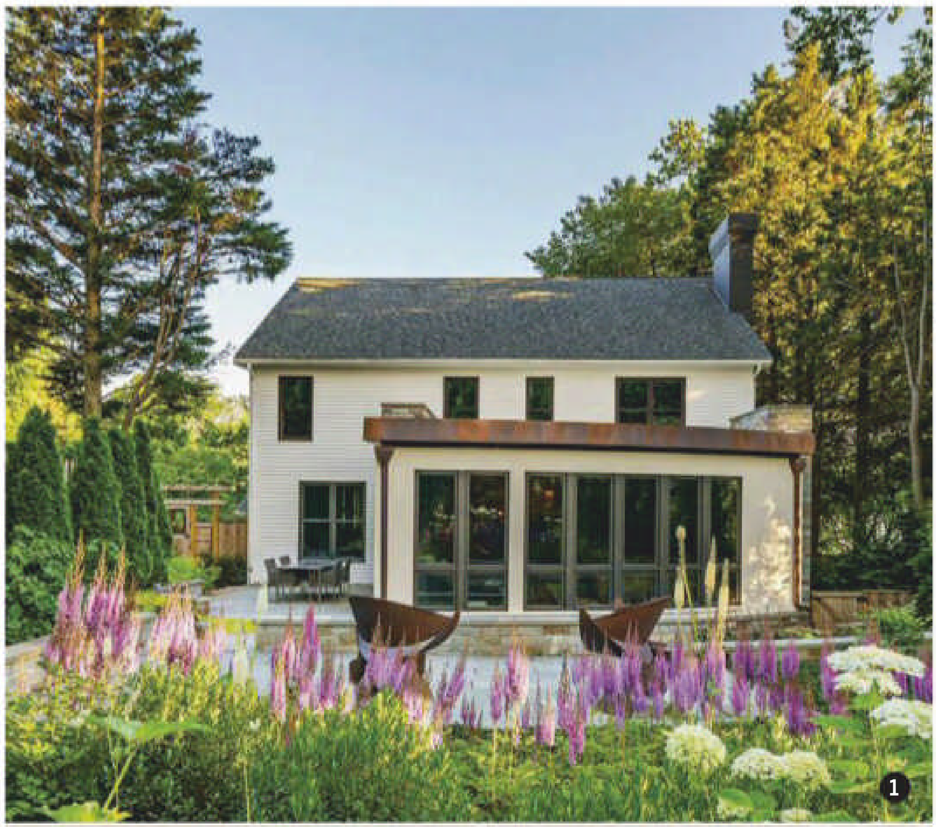
NEW DESIGN FOR THE ORIGINAL GARDEN CITY

Danish architecture practice CF Møller took the top award in the Concept – Analysis and Planning category at this year's World Landscape Architect Awards for its re-imagining of the UK's first garden city. Founded in 1905 by urban planner Ebenezer Howard, Letchworth Garden City was an early attempt to create a healthy and sustainable community. CF Møller's 45-hectare masterplan for the Hertfordshire town links areas of productive growing, performance spaces and amenity landscapes, and is buffered from noise and wind by a wild landscape that increases biodiversity. The scheme was the winning entry in the 2019 Re-imagining the Garden City competition organised by Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation and is focused on a modern interpretation of the hamlet. In other categories the 2020 WLA Awards were dominated by schemes from China including a renewal project in Guangzhou by Lab D+H, which won the Award of Excellence in the Built Large category. **cfmoller.com; worldlandscapearchitect.com**

CF MØLLER, WYRDTREE

News

COMPILED BY ANNIE GATTI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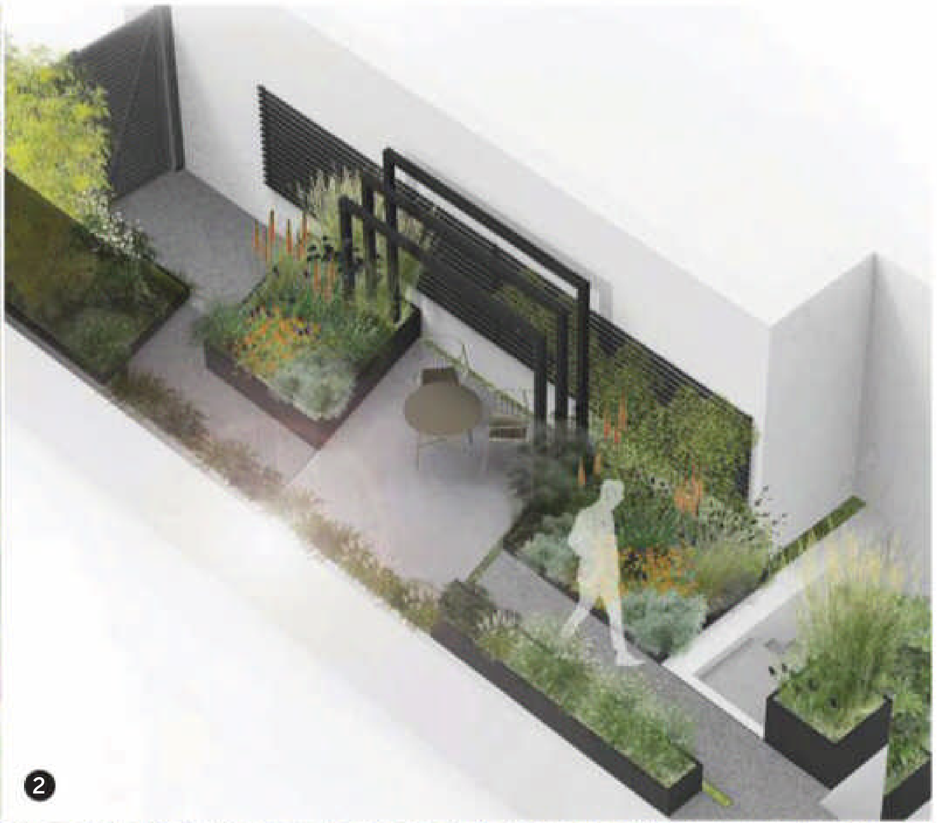
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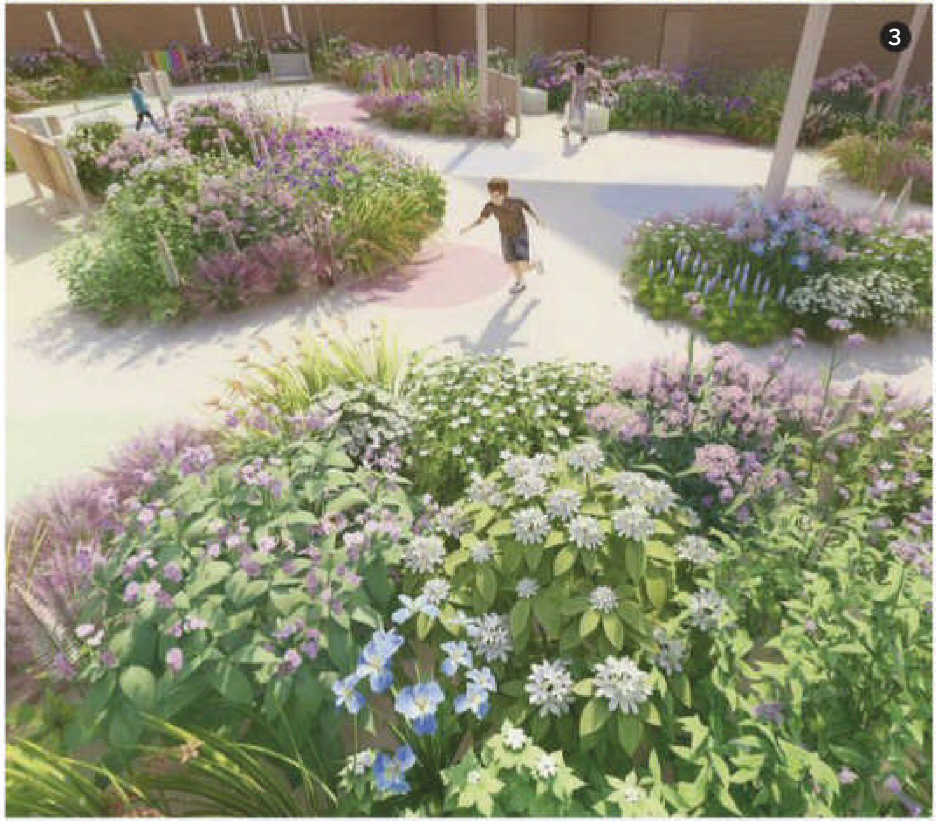
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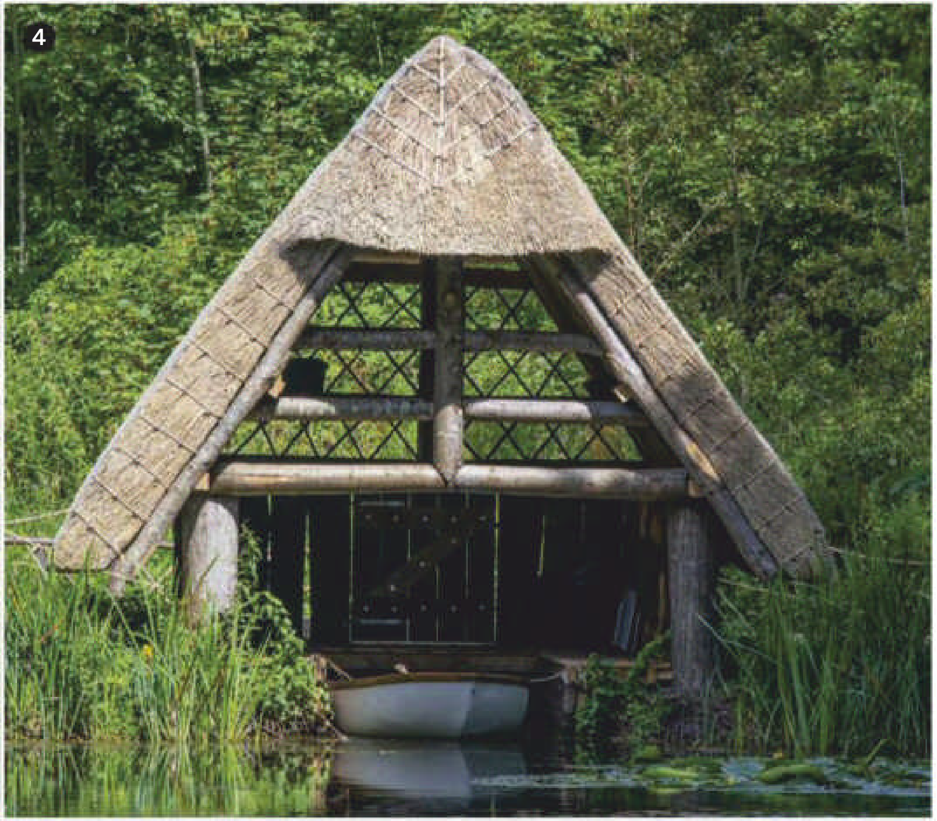
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① APLD DESIGN AWARDS 2020

UK practice McWilliam Studio was among the winners in this year's Association of Professional Landscape Designers International Design Awards, taking gold in the Show Gardens category for its 2017 RHS Chelsea Flower Show garden Breaking Ground, which featured monumental steel structures. In the Residential Category $25,000-$100,000, Washington DC-based practice Jennifer Horn Landscape Architecture also won gold for a garden in Maryland (shown), where massed planting, which varies in colour and texture, references the clients' art collection. **apld.org**

② NEW DESIGN BURSARY

The London College of Garden Design has announced the winner of its new £6,000 bursary to study on the Planting Design Diploma taught at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Andrew Smith-Williams' winning design is for a small, narrow city plot that provides year-round interest and uses a sustainable approach to planting. Based on Andrew's own south-facing garden, the 2.3m x 8m space features a wide range of perennials, grasses and bulbs, and a small *Sambucus nigra* Golden Tower (='Jdeboer001') tree, and also includes socialising space for four people . **lcgd.org.uk**

③ NAOMI HOUSE SENSORY GARDEN

A new sensory garden for Naomi House hospice for children and young adults in Winchester, has been designed by Luke Mills of The Landscape Service. The design provides multiple spaces for play and therapy. Wide paths allow children to interact with the sensory planting and there will be wheelchair accessible swings and a roundabout. A small amphitheatre enables outdoor learning. New wheelchair accessible planters will be installed around the existing chicken run, where children with a range of disabilities can engage with gardening. **naomihouse.org.uk**

④ ARUNDEL CASTLE WATER GARDENS

Arundel Castle's historic 'stew ponds' (where fish were once kept for stews) have been re-designed by head gardener Martin Duncan to provide a water garden that teems with wildlife. A circular route leads you around the three ponds, which are connected by a boardwalk and rustic bridge. A thatched roundhouse provides a focal point and a viewing place for visitors. There is also a new thatched boathouse built by local artisans Kevin Coull and Bradley Hanson, using sustainably grown timber. The thatching for both was completed by master thatcher Gavin MacDonald, and his sons. **arundelcastle.org**

1 JENNIFER HORN; 2 ANDREW SMITH-WILLIAMS; 3 THE LANDSCAPE SERVICE; 4 ARUNDEL CASTLE.

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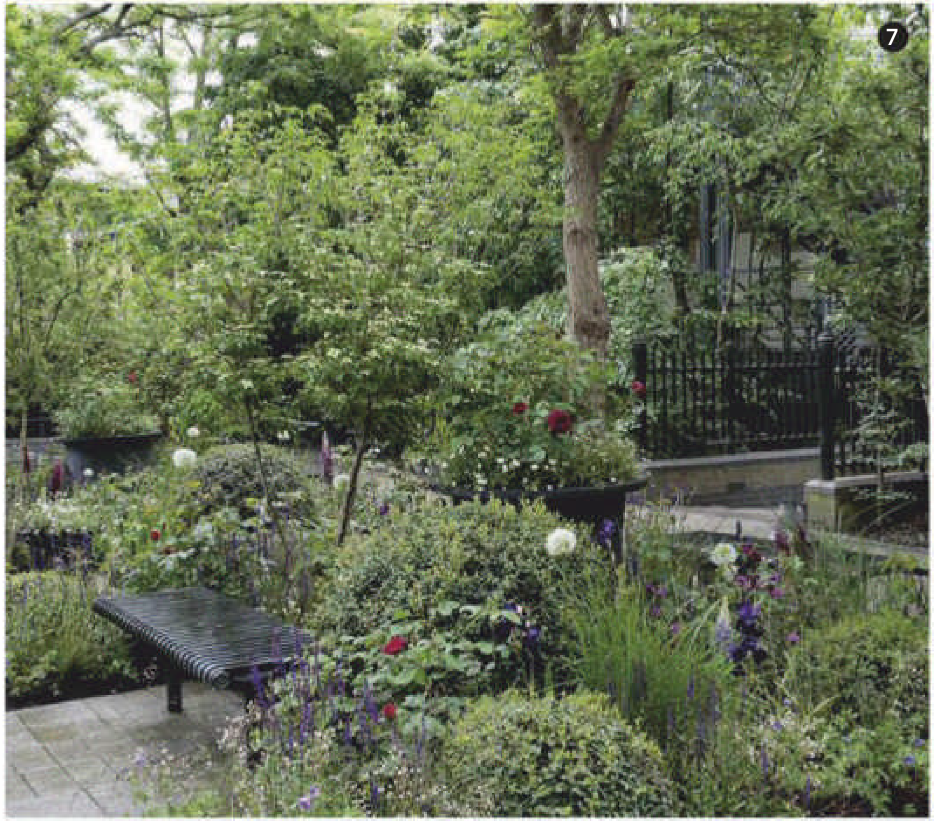

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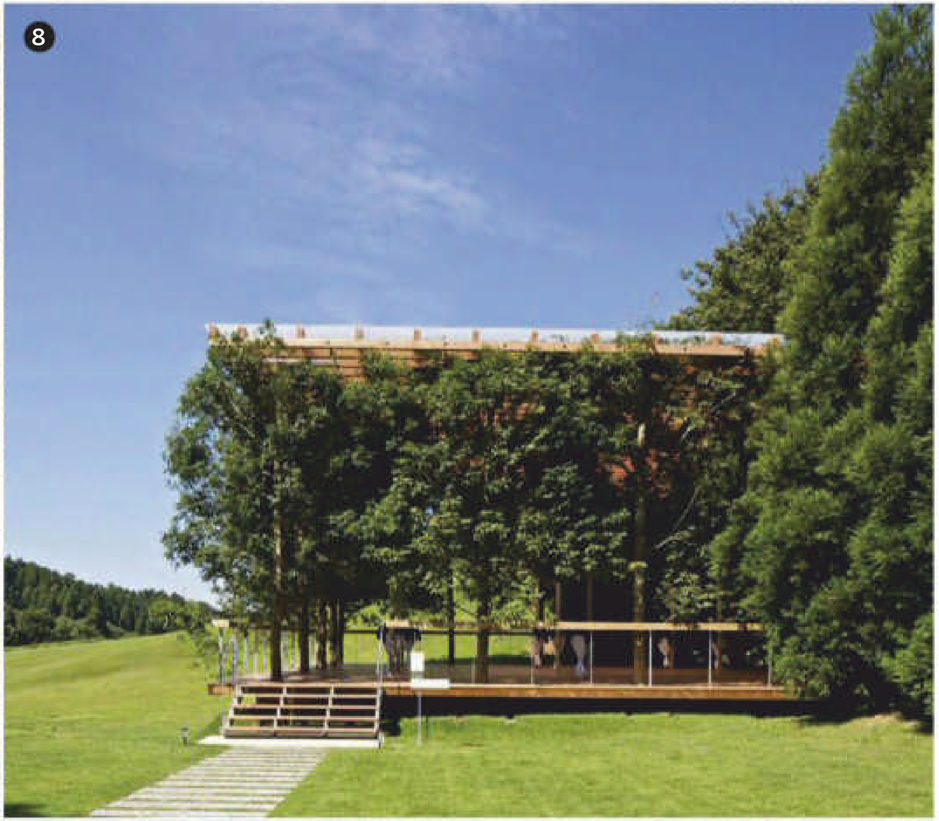

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⑤ NEW PARK TACKLES CLIMATE CHANGE

A new park, dubbed 'Sponge Park' for the ways in which it helps to tackle flooding has opened in east Manchester. Designed by landscape architects BDP, West Gorton Community Park includes features such as swales planted with aquatic vegetation to help capture excess water, and rain gardens that contain plants such as *Rodgersia pinnata* that can handle being waterlogged. The design has three distinct areas: a woodland area with timber play features; a biodiverse meadow with orchard trees and picnic tables; and a garden area with space for events and community growing. **bdp.com**

⑥ NEW GARDENS FOR KING'S COLLEGE

Robert Myers Associates has produced the landscape masterplan for a sustainable development at King's College, Cambridge. The scheme, by architects Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios, provides 84 new homes for students and Fellows, and the landscape design creates a central communal space, crossed by diagonal paths, a generous lawn with linear landform, and a terraced amphitheatre. The rear gardens are more informal, with a woodland garden created around existing trees. A shared allotment garden is planned for the sunny southwestern corner. **robertmyers-associates.co.uk**

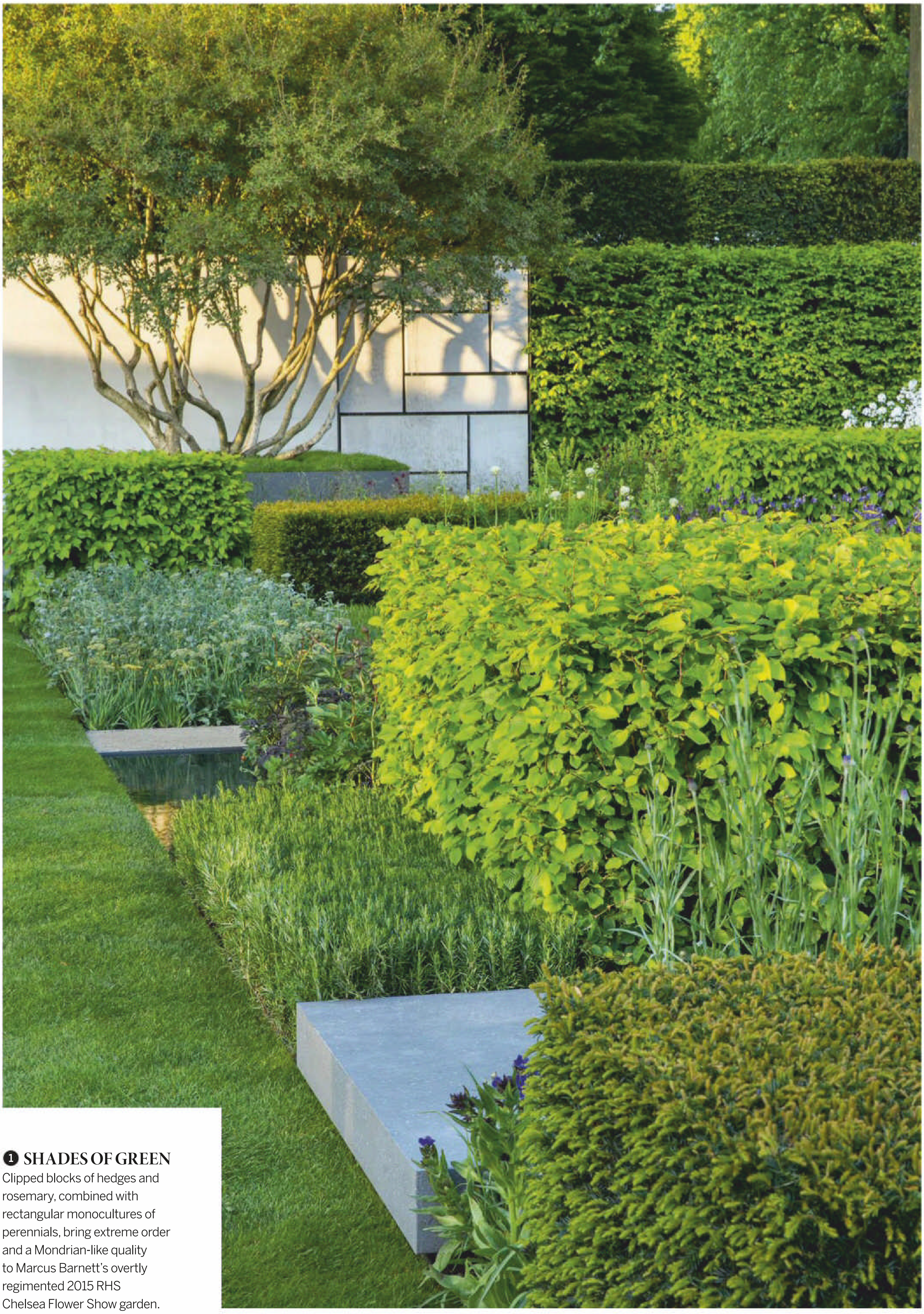
⑦ PLANTS DONATED TO LONDON HOSPITAL

RHS ambassador Jamie Butterworth and his team have planted out a scented garden for staff of Chelsea and Westminster Hospital using more than 1,000 donated plants. Multi-stem trees, and topiary domes and pyramids have transformed a paved inner courtyard alongside new beds filled with flowering perennials, including roses, dianthus, irises, alliums, lupins and salvias, and scented, evergreen shrubs, such as *Sarcococca hookeriana*. The donated plants had all been grown by Form Plants for the Amaffi Garden at this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show. **butterworthhorticulture.co.uk**

⑧ WHITE FLOWER ARBOR

Tokyo-based APL Design Workshop's has created an unusual raised foyer for an open-air theatre in Kurobe, Japan. Known as the White Flower Arbor, the tree-ringed pavilion serves both as a theatre lobby where audiences can gather between performances and a backstage area for the actors. Oak and cedar trees support the corrugated roof, with further support against the weight of winter snow provided by nine steel beams that double as pillars to which tables can be attached. At night, these tables are lit from below. **apldw.co.jp**

5 MARK WAUGH; 6 ROBERT MYERS ASSOCIATES; 7 LYNN KEDDIE; 8 APL DESIGN WORKSHOP



❶ SHADES OF GREEN
Clipped blocks of hedges and rosemary, combined with rectangular monocultures of perennials, bring extreme order and a Mondrian-like quality to Marcus Barnett's overtly regimented 2015 RHS Chelsea Flower Show garden.

MARIANNE MAJERUS GARDEN IMAGES

Control of nature

From the man-made lakes and hills of grand country estates to naturalistic prairie plantings on more modest plots, the secret of a successful garden always lies in how you choose to shape the natural world

WORDS ANDY STURGEON

Gardening is fundamentally about the control of nature. We mow the lawn to keep it short. We let the Virginia creeper scramble up the house but we remove it from the gutters and don't let it grow across the windows. Even the most naturalistic of perennial plantings is entirely our own contrivance, combining plants that would rarely rub shoulders in the wild. A hedge is not a hedge if it's not kept under control. On a vast scale, the likes of 'Capability' Brown and Humphry Repton altered nature by digging lakes, making hills and planting woods simply to improve a view.

The allées and clipped parterres of Britain's palaces and stately homes were surely a demonstration of power and a mastery of the uncontrollable, but even in our relatively modest gardens we are always trying to manipulate or to enhance nature.

A recent fashion has been for the multi-stem tree. A finely worked branch structure and an umbrella-shaped canopy. Amelanchiers were the first of these but now nurseries will train anything they can to quench the thirst of the gardeners. *Crataegus*, *Osmanthus*, *Parrotia* – nothing escapes the secateurs. From a design point of view, a grid or a row of almost identical trees can bring formality and order to even a small space. The branches are like a piece of sculpture, textured or silky smooth yet often unnoticed if not 'cleaned up'. These are easy to create but you must start early. Begin with a small shrub such as *Pittosporum tobira* and check it has three or more stems growing from very low down. Lift the skirts and routinely snip off the side shoots and clean up the stems. Sometimes older larger shrubs such as *Viburnum tinus* can be transformed from full, amorphous blobs into majestic, multi-stems with a few well placed chops so it's worth peering inside existing shrubs to see if they have potential.

Nurseries produce many forms of plants from roof-trained trees to ready-formed hornbeam arches, yet there are countless other possibilities requiring only minimal effort but large amounts of time and a dose of creativity. I've planted bosques where each tree in the circle has a 45-degree lean on it before being allowed in time to grow skywards as nature intended. This brings an idiosyncratic flavour to a garden that can't be provided by any of the more expected clipped topiary and hedge forms. By bending over the 'leader' and tying it in to its opposite number it is possible to train a tree into a dome. To create a perfect curve, a temporary metal armature of framework can be used and then removed after a number of years. These sort of projects are best started as soon as possible so you can witness the fruits of your labour.

A bit of clipping can bring welcome order to a loose and possibly even unruly planting design. A simple low square of yew sitting among autumnal grasses and seedheads will immediately restore order and visually tidy the whole thing up. Despite its various woes, box is still used as clipped balls or domed pillows but there are other candidates including *Osmanthus* x *burkwoodii* and *Phillyrea* that do the job well, their dark foliage contrasting well with perennial leaves through different seasons and giving evergreen structure to large areas and even meadows. In extreme cases there are some wonderful examples of a single plant species clipped into undulating mounds spilling on to paving and very little else.

A simple low square of yew sitting among autumnal grasses and seedheads will immediately restore order and visually tidy the whole thing up

Pleached hedges have now entered the vocabulary of gardeners. A legacy of the grand gardens, they are now deployed on a smaller scale in smart town gardens as a living fence to shield the prying eyes of the neighbours. This hedge on sticks takes up little or no space on the ground and although limes, hornbeams and beech are common it is possible to train evergreen oleasters, magnolias, oaks and photinias. The result is often a useful, regimented framework on which to hang a more relaxed style of planting within the garden.

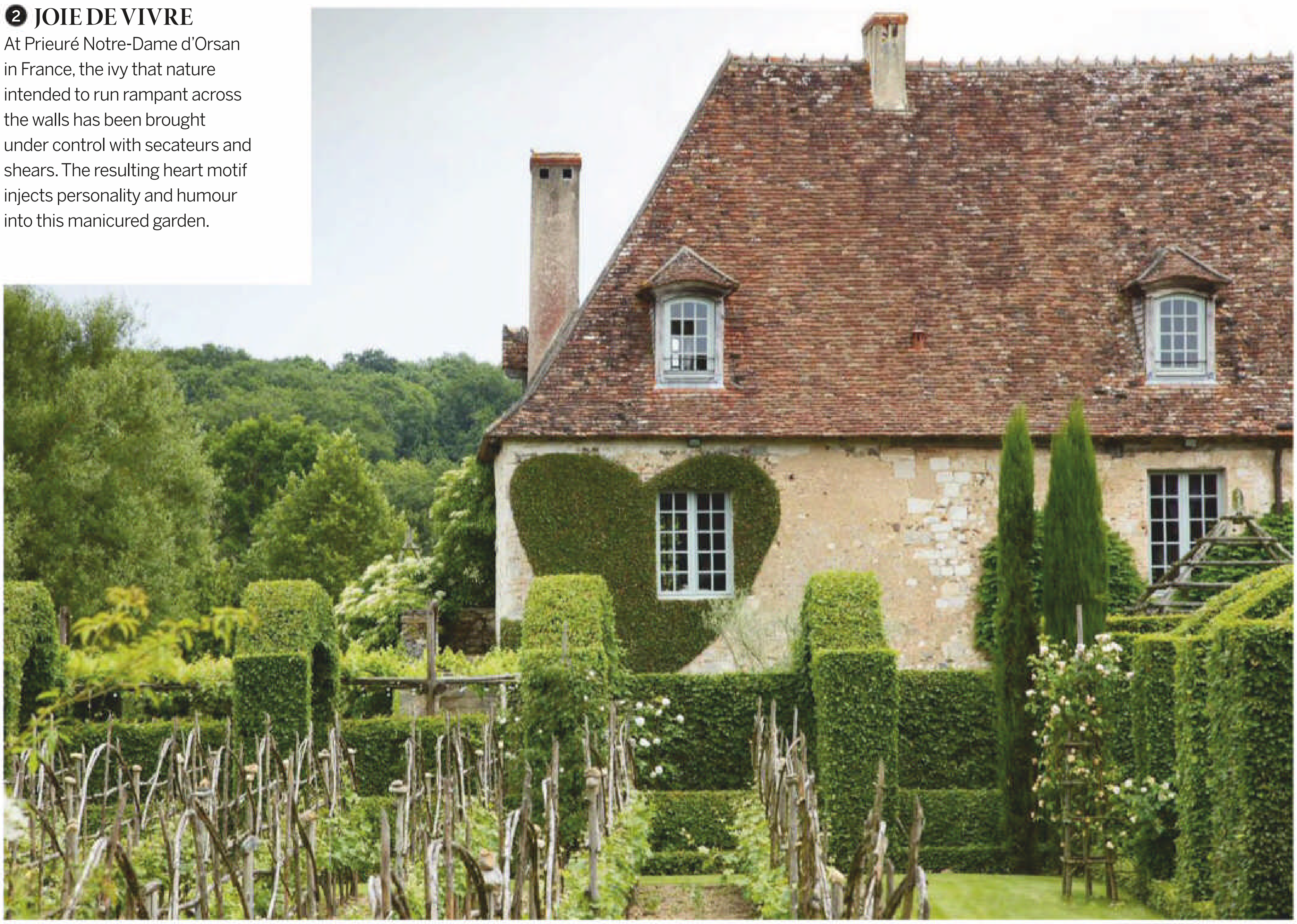
On the ground I am a huge fan of clipped ivy. It is highly underrated. This fantastic groundcover will grow in the dry shade of trees and will smother weeds and prevent the growth of other plants. You can cut it away from path edges with shears or large areas can be done with hedge trimmers making a neat edge and a wonderfully uniform carpet of evergreen foliage. Being low growing it can put space into a garden and become part of the rhythm between more complex plantings, calming things down and highlighting the excitement elsewhere. It's also a useful device for minimalistic gardens. You need to keep an eye on it so it doesn't get out of hand but that, I suppose, is the point; you are in control of it. □

Andy Sturgeon is an internationally renowned landscape and garden designer. He is the winner of eight gold medals at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, including Best in Show in 2019. **andysturgeon.com**

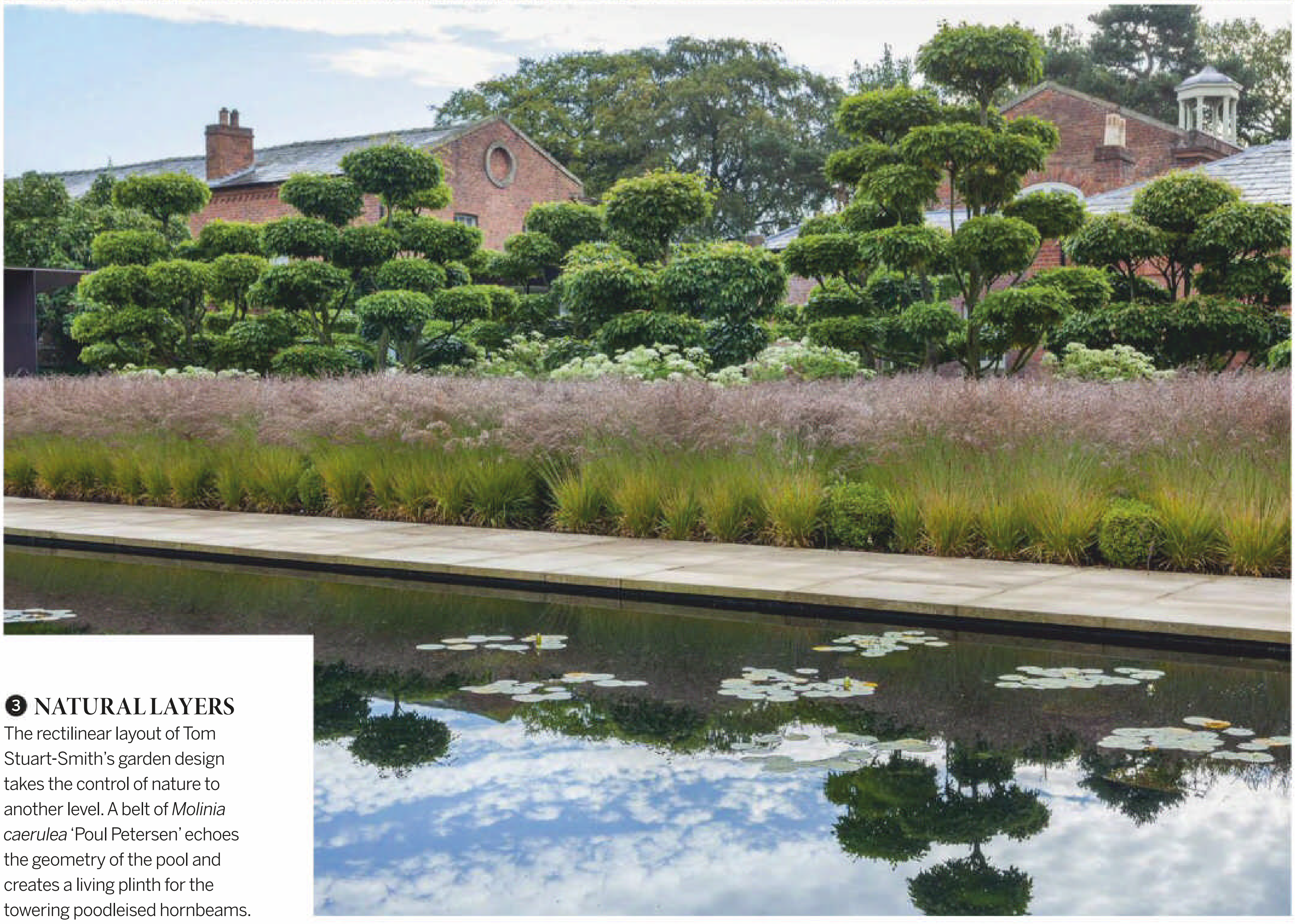
Turn the page for more ideas on controlling nature

❷ JOIE DE VIVRE

At Prieuré Notre-Dame d'Orsan in France, the ivy that nature intended to run rampant across the walls has been brought under control with secateurs and shears. The resulting heart motif injects personality and humour into this manicured garden.



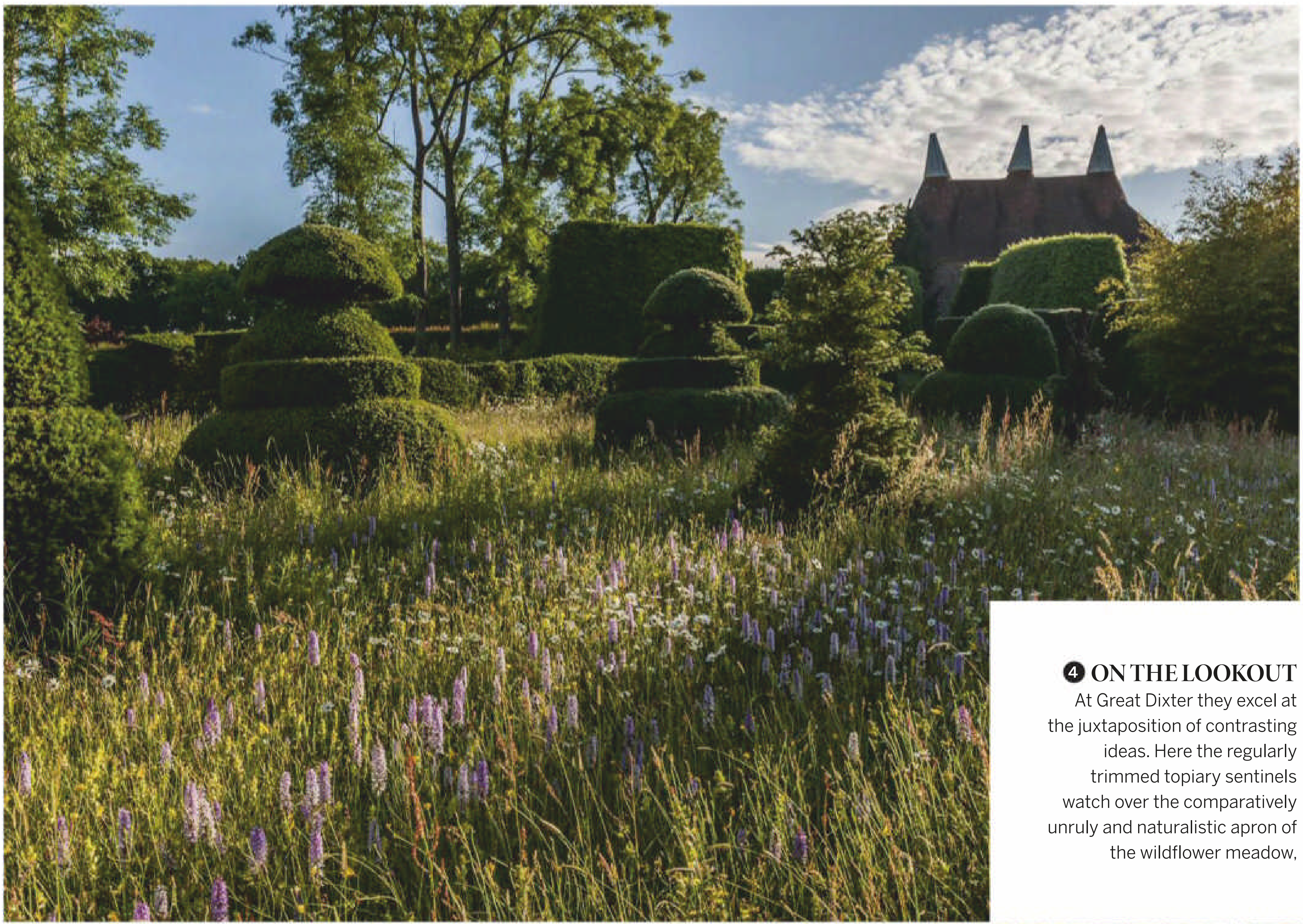
ANNAÏCK GUITTENY/ GAP PHOTOS



❸ NATURAL LAYERS

The rectilinear layout of Tom Stuart-Smith's garden design takes the control of nature to another level. A belt of *Molinia caerulea* 'Poul Petersen' echoes the geometry of the pool and creates a living plinth for the towering poodleised hornbeams.

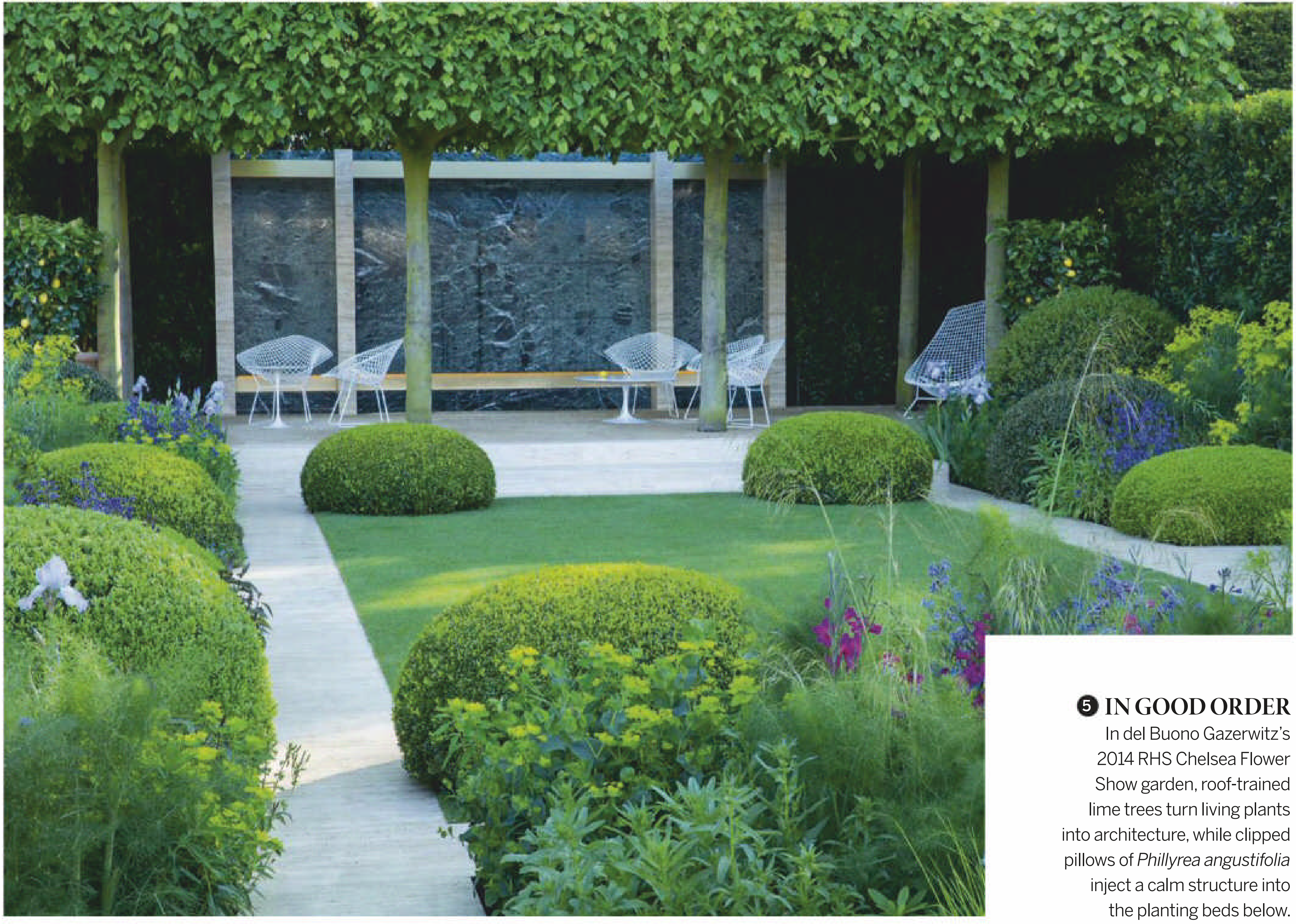
MARIANNE MAJERUS GARDEN IMAGES



JOHN GLOVER / GAP PHOTOS

❹ ON THE LOOKOUT

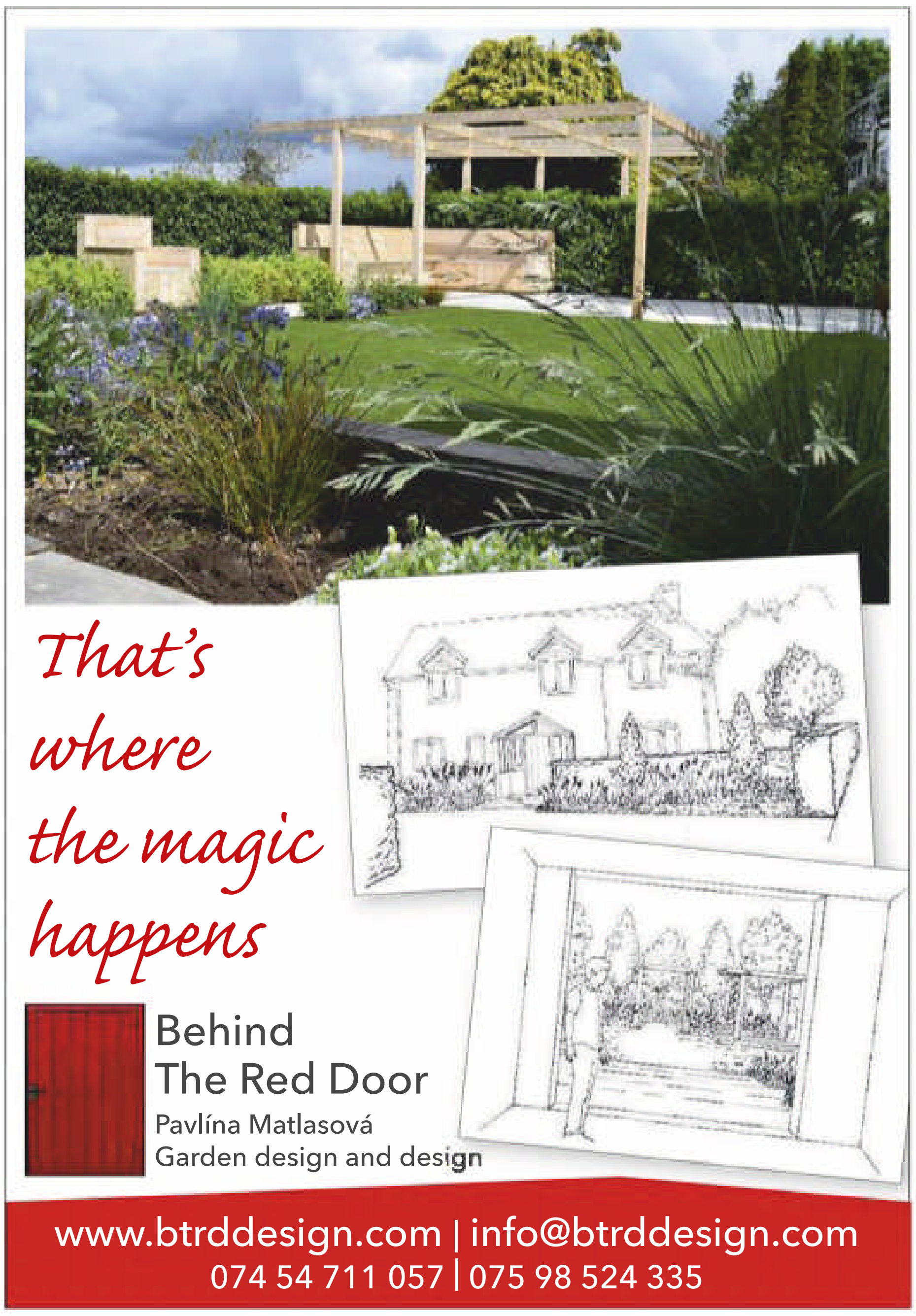
At Great Dixter they excel at the juxtaposition of contrasting ideas. Here the regularly trimmed topiary sentinels watch over the comparatively unruly and naturalistic apron of the wildflower meadow,



MARIANNE MAJERUS GARDEN IMAGES

❺ IN GOOD ORDER

In del Buono Gazerwitz's 2014 RHS Chelsea Flower Show garden, roof-trained lime trees turn living plants into architecture, while clipped pillows of *Phillyrea angustifolia* inject a calm structure into the planting beds below.



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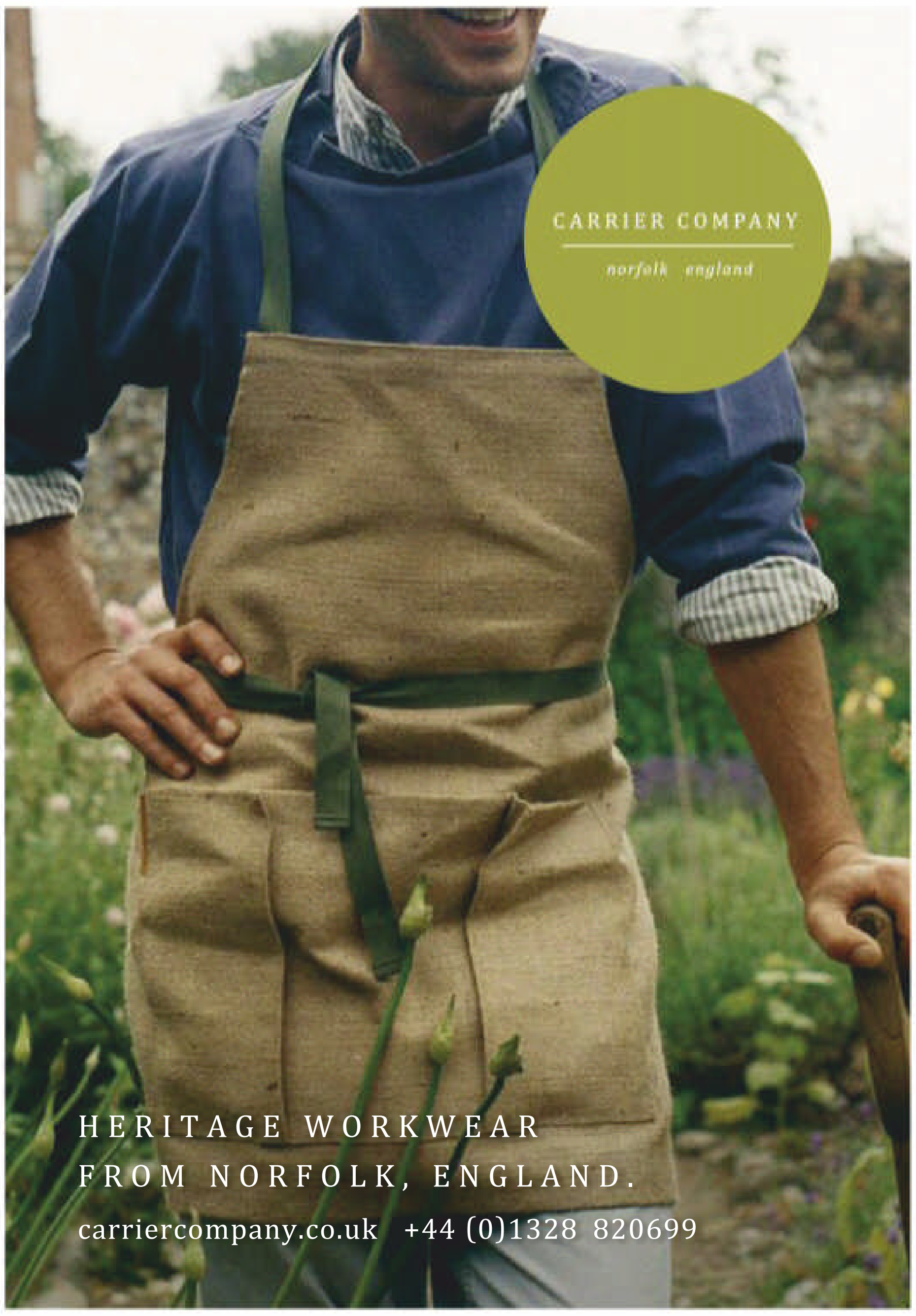

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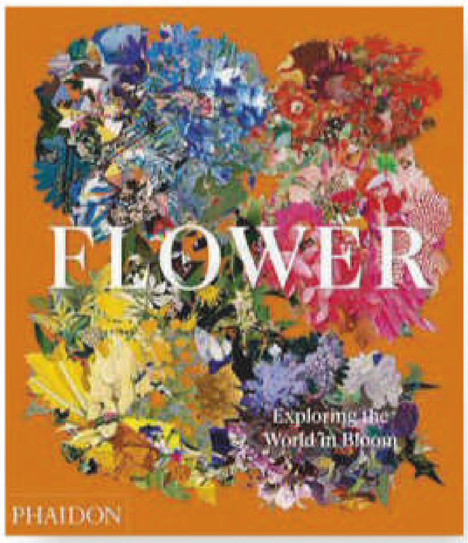
DOWNTOOLS

Book reviews, reader offer, back issues, crossword

Luke Stephenson's *The English Rose* (2019), captures the iconic English flower's diversity, and is one of more than 300 images included in Phaidon's new title *Flower*, reviewed on page 104.

© LUKE STEPHENSON (PAGE 307) *FLOWER: EXPLORING THE WORLD IN BLOOM* IS PUBLISHED BY PHAIDON, £39.95 (PHAIDON.COM)

BOOK REVIEWS



FLOWER: EXPLORING THE WORLD IN BLOOM

by Phaidon Editors

Phaidon, £39.95,
ISBN 978-1838660857

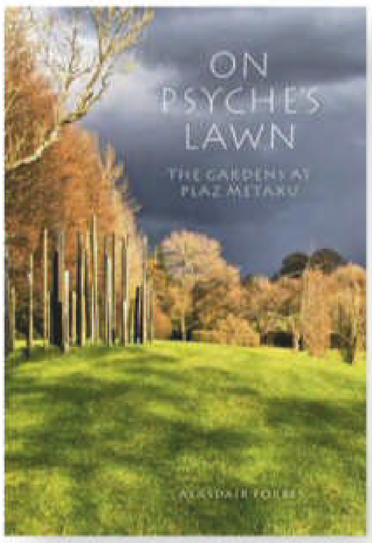
This captivating catalogue of flowers, as depicted in art throughout the ages, also includes an insightful introduction from Tulip *author Anna Pavord.*

Reviewer Katie Dutton is editorial assistant for Gardens Illustrated.

Following the success of its book *Plant: Exploring the Botanical World*, Phaidon has now turned its focus to the world of flowers. The new title highlights flowers as a source of inspiration throughout history, art and culture; from ancient Islamic jewellery to contemporary digital flower shows. We have continuously found new, inventive uses for flowers, and though the flowers themselves have not changed greatly over the years, our fascination for them as subject has endured.

Interestingly, as Anna Pavord points out in her introduction, early images of flowering plants in the Middle Ages initially placed emphasis on the roots, rather than the head, leaves and seeds, as it was a plant's medicinal properties that people most revered. Later, imagery of flowers became less functional and more decorative and symbolic; the sunflower (before van Gogh turned his eye to it) was used as an icon for love and loyalty in the Catholic Church. Flowers would also become emblematic of both war and peace: red and white roses acting as emblems of the warring factions in England's bloody 15th-century civil war; and the fluorescent daisies serving as symbols of 'free love' in the 1960s. As technology advanced in the 19th century, the shift returned to science, with cyanotypes and photographs able to capture a flower in minute detail. Now smart phones and social media allow us all to frame and shoot a flower, frozen in time forever.

The arrangement of images in *Flower* doesn't follow a chronological order. Instead images from across the ages are presented on facing pages, each image echoing the other in its impressions of a flower or flowers. By comparing the archaic with the contemporary, we are reminded that, though the years and context between the images may be vast, the artist's relationship and fascination with their subject is steadfast. Like life, the flower is fragile and temporary, but we can cherish the beauty of them all the more thanks to *Flower*.



ON PSYCHE'S LAWN: THE GARDEN AT PLAZ METAXU

by Alasdair Forbes

Pimpernel Press, £37.50
ISBN 978-1910258811

A densely written, beautifully illustrated paean to one man's philosophy of art and ideas, and his creation of an extraordinary, innovative garden.

Jodie Jones is a freelance garden writer.

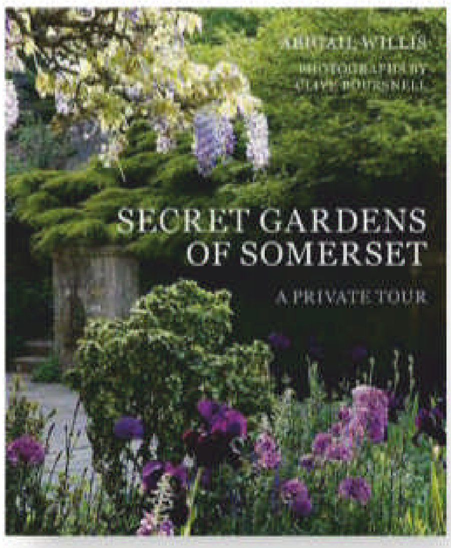
From 18th-century allegorical landscapes to the conceptual categories at contemporary flower shows, there is a long tradition of gardens crafted to convey a subtext. But does such a garden need to be explained in order to be appreciated?

Alasdair Forbes strongly believes that it does. He has spent nearly 30 years developing the extraordinary Devon garden of ideas that he named Plaz Metaxu, from the Greek for 'the place that is between', and now he has produced some 300 elegantly glossy pages to convey the philosophy that underpins this creation. 'When I try to describe what my style of gardening is, I sometimes call it "caesural gardening" or I might refer to the garden's "Orphic spatiality".'

His words will hit the uninitiated with a tsunami of references to art, architecture, literature, mythology, psychology and philosophy, couched in dense language that makes no concession to the casual reader. Is this a conscious ploy to palisade the intellectual high ground, or the untrammelled enthusiasm of a man who has devoted decades to metaphysical concepts and artistic abstractions, leaving their physical manifestation to his indefatigable gardener Cyril Harris?

Either way, their partnership has produced a garden that is right up there with Ian Hamilton Finlay's Little Sparta or the work of the late Charles Jencks, and even those who struggle with Forbes's text will admire the series of exquisite images captured by photographers Neil Hepworth, Andrew Lawson and Jo Whitworth.

Books of this heft and polish are often consigned, unread, to a coffee table where they are appreciated for their superficial beauty in much the same way that a casual visitor to Plaz Metaxu might simply stroll around and enjoy the view. *On Psyche's Lawn* makes Forbes's case that 'the beauty we discover there cannot but involve us in the search for what its meaning might be.'



SECRET GARDENS OF SOMERSET: A PRIVATE TOUR

by Abigail Willis

Frances Lincoln, £22
ISBN 978-0711252226

Here's a gardens book that glories in Somerset's romantic sleepiness, but also delights in its spirit and passion to drive forward the art of gardening.

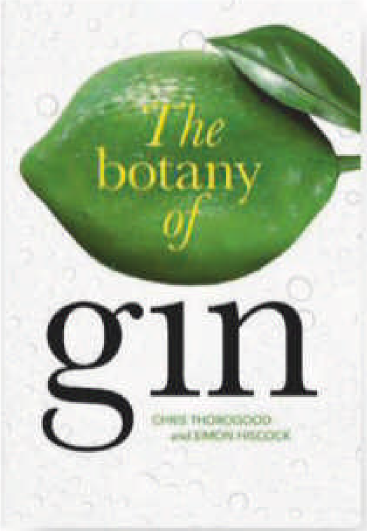
Reviewer Sorrel Everton is deputy editor of Gardens Illustrated.

If you weren't aware of the slow increase in Somerset desirability as the hidden destination for the garden lover, this book will certainly help prove its ample worth. Move over the Cotswolds: here's an extensive and varied list of must-see Somerset gardens, spanning historic heritage gardens right through to modern classics, that define this county's unique appeal.

Through her selection of 20 gardens, author Abigail Willis, who has lived in the county for two decades, unearths the shabby chic charm of the county described by many as 'unpretentious' and grounded in its own sense of being. There's every type of garden here; garden history at Hestercombe House, classic cottage gardens at East Lambrook Manor, pioneering organics at Greencombe Gardens and Yeo Valley, flower farms at Common Farm. And then there's the striking new examples that are forging Somerset's future – Piet Oudolf's New Perennials field at art gallery Hauser & Wirth, and The Newt, opened in 2019 as a totally new reimagining and relandscaping of the Hadspen House Estate of Penelope Hobhouse and Sandra and Nori Pope fame, adding another layer to its history.

Vibrant photography from Clive Boursnell reveals these gardens in their flower-filled glory but what Willis really brings out in this book is that the story of a garden is as much about the people, as it is the picture-perfect result that we see as a snapshot. There's no denying the hard work behind each of these locations but it's a celebration of the owner's tenacity and sheer delight in creating or tending their sanctuaries. As Mary-Anne Robb of the Arts and Crafts garden at Cothay Manor declares 'to love and to labour is the sum of life'.

These gardens embrace time and we would be do well to give each some time too, either through the pages of this book – or better, by following Willis's guide and visiting in person.



THE BOTANY OF GIN

by Chris Thorogood and Simon Hiscock

Bodeleian Libraries in association with Oxford Botanic Garden ,£15,
ISBN 978-1851245536

A beautifully illustrated book that tells the story of this iconic drink, through the aromatic plants that are used in its production.

Reviewer Tom Coward is head gardener at Gravetye Manor.

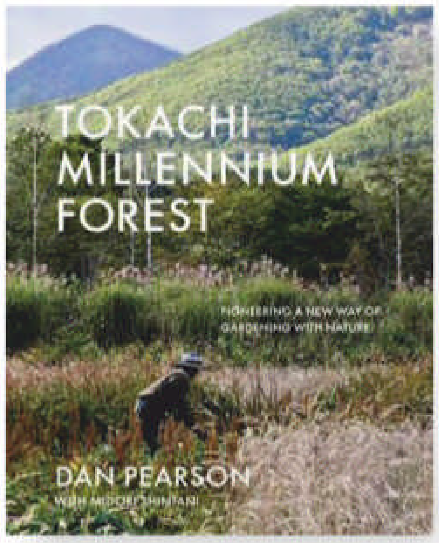
I had the pleasure of reading this lovely book one hot afternoon in a shady spot of the garden. Naturally, I mixed myself a large G&T to enhance the experience and the more I read, the more I appreciated each sip. The introduction takes us through the fascinating history of gin that begins with its use as a medicine in Ancient Greece, then takes us through its introduction to England from the Netherlands in the 16th century and the 'gin craze' of the 18th century, which reduced London to 'the most lawless and drunken city in Europe', to its subsequent prohibition. Later gin saw a renaissance in the 19th century and its increasing popularity today. Methods of making gin are also discussed, resulting in the vast range of classical, contemporary and artisan gins we have today.

The majority of this book is dedicated to the botanicals, a huge and diverse range of aromatic plants. These are sourced from all over the world and are the plants that truly tell the story of this complex drink. Each plant has a page of its own, with detailed description, geographical distribution and information on its use. Simon Hiscock's exquisite botanical illustrations are almost reason enough to buy this book. Each one is a beautiful work of art. However, this is far more than a pretty picture book. Chris Thorogood's deep knowledge, understanding and appreciation of both gin and the plants, opens our eyes to the subtleties and complexities of the blending of this range of plant-based flavours.

Anyone who enjoys a good gin and tonic will enjoy this book, and its concise information about the extraordinary range of botanicals now used is likely to inspire further exploration of the many exciting varieties of this well loved spirit.

The Botany of Gin will make a very welcome addition to the bookshelf in our bar at Gravetye Manor.

BOOK REVIEWS


TOKACHI MILLENNIUM FOREST
PIONEERING A NEW WAY OF GARDENING WITH NATURE
DAN PEARSON
WITH MIDORI SHINTANI

TOKACHI MILLENNIUM FOREST: PIONEERING A NEW WAY OF GARDENING WITH NATURE

by Dan Pearson with
Midori Shintani

Filbert Press, £40
ISBN 978-1999734541

A fascinating account of the development of this ambitious ecological park in Japan where East meets West with immersive naturalistic planting.

Reviewer Annie Gatti is a garden writer and author.

In 2000 Dan Pearson was invited to become part of the evolution of the Tokachi Millennium Forest, a remarkable ecological project on Hokkaido, Japan's northernmost island. The 400-hecatre site, an area that had been cleared for agriculture and commercial forestry, had been acquired by Japanese newspaper magnate Mitsushige Hayashi to create a public park that would bring people closer to nature and would be sustainable for 1,000 years.

When Pearson arrived on site, work had already begun to regenerate the woodland flora, which was accessed by a series of walkways, there was a restaurant and goat farm, and trails that led up into the foothills, but it was clear that visitors were overwhelmed by the scale of the surroundings and the open expanses. Pearson was tasked with adding layers of intimacy to the scheme that would draw people into the whole site.

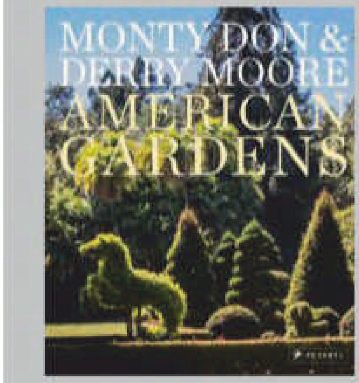
The centrepiece of Pearson's Garden Masterplan is the Meadow Garden, an immersive celebration of indigenous plants and selections of them combined with garden-worthy plants that have a natural appearance, are familiar to temperate-zone gardeners and will cope with Tokachi's compressed growing season and snow-covered winter months.

A third of the book is devoted to a detailed description of how this matrix was developed and continues to be managed, with a light hand, by head gardener Midori Shintani and her team. This section provides a masterclass in naturalistic planting that provides continual seasonal change and interest.

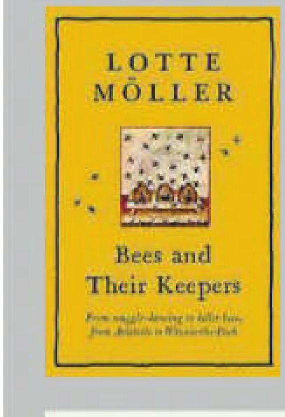
Painterly photography by Kiichi Noro and Syogo Oizumi reveal both the detail and wider views of this astonishingly beautiful meadow planting and of the forest flora. Shintani's distinctive voice illuminates traditional Japanese reverence for the seasons (all 72 of them) and inspires the feeling that this unique 'garden' is in the surest of hands.

Other books

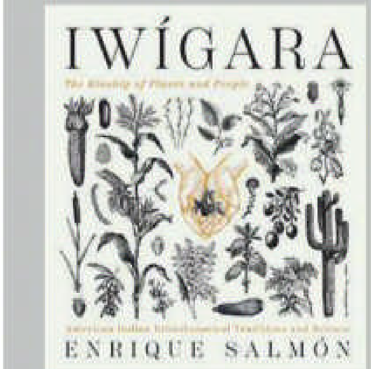
From the history and mythology of beekeeping to the science of plant therapy, there is much to nourish the mind this month.



AMERICAN GARDENS
by Monty Don and Derry Moore
Prestel Publishing, £35
ISBN 978-3791386751
Monty Don and photographer Derry Moore travel across the USA tracing the histories of spaces that redefine the American garden.



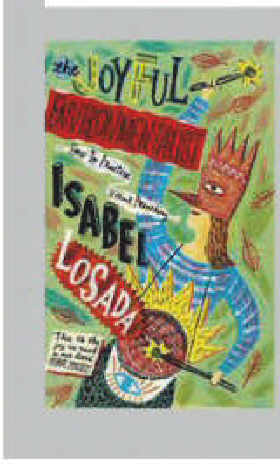
BEES AND THEIR KEEPERS
by Lotte Möller,
MacLehose Press, £20
ISBN 978-1529405262
Winner of Sweden's Garden Book of the Year 2019, a charming look at the history of beekeeping, from myth and folklore to our practical relationship with bees.



IWIGARA
by Enrique Salmon
Timber Press, £26.99
ISBN 978-1604698800
A beautiful catalogue of 80 North American plants, revered by indigenous peoples for thousands of years for their nourishing, healing and symbolic properties.

Plant Therapy

PLANT THERAPY
by Dr Katie Cooper
Hardie Grant Books, £16.99
ISBN 978-1784883522
Psychologist Dr Cooper shares her research on how indoor plants help our mental health, with tips on how to create your own green oasis, and the most effective plants.



THE JOYFUL ENVIRONMENTALIST
by Isabel Losada
Watkins Publishing, £12.99
ISBN 978-1786784704
Isabel Losada's upbeat and accessible book provides easy, optimistic tips on how to take care of our planet.

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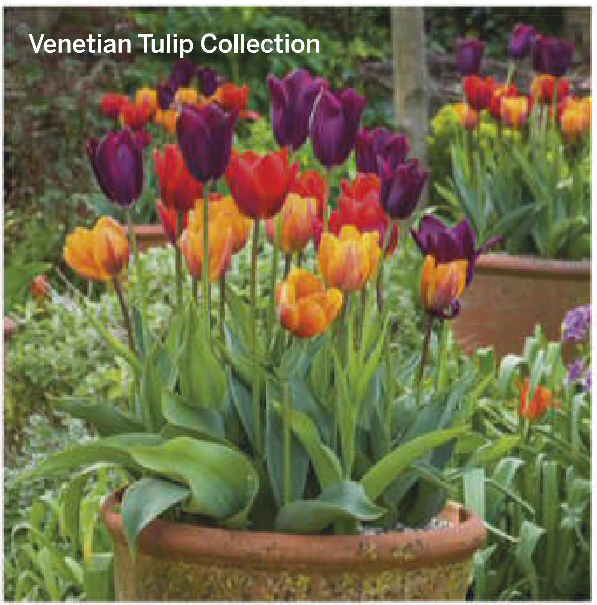
Dark Peony Flowered Tulip Collection


Venetian Tulip Collection

Sweet Wine Tulip Collection

Autumn is the time to plant spring-flowering bulbs, and tulips are an essential ingredient of any spring garden. These unmissable collections have been chosen by Sarah for their knockout colour and top-size bulbs to ensure bright and stunning displays come spring.

OFFER *Gardens Illustrated* readers receive 20% off* – across Sarah Raven's entire autumn range. Order now for the best choice. To see the full range of bulbs, plants and seeds go to **sarahraven.com**

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PLANTING GUIDE

- **To plant your tulips,** dig a trench/hole 20cm deep and, if you garden on heavy soil, cover the base with 5cm of washed sharp sand, horticultural grit, or spent compost.
- **Add a handful of bonemeal** to encourage formation of flowers. Mix it into the soil/grit at the base of the hole.
- **Tulips make supreme cut flowers.** Strip the bottom leaves, tie the stems in paper to hold them straight and leave to drink for at least three hours before arranging.

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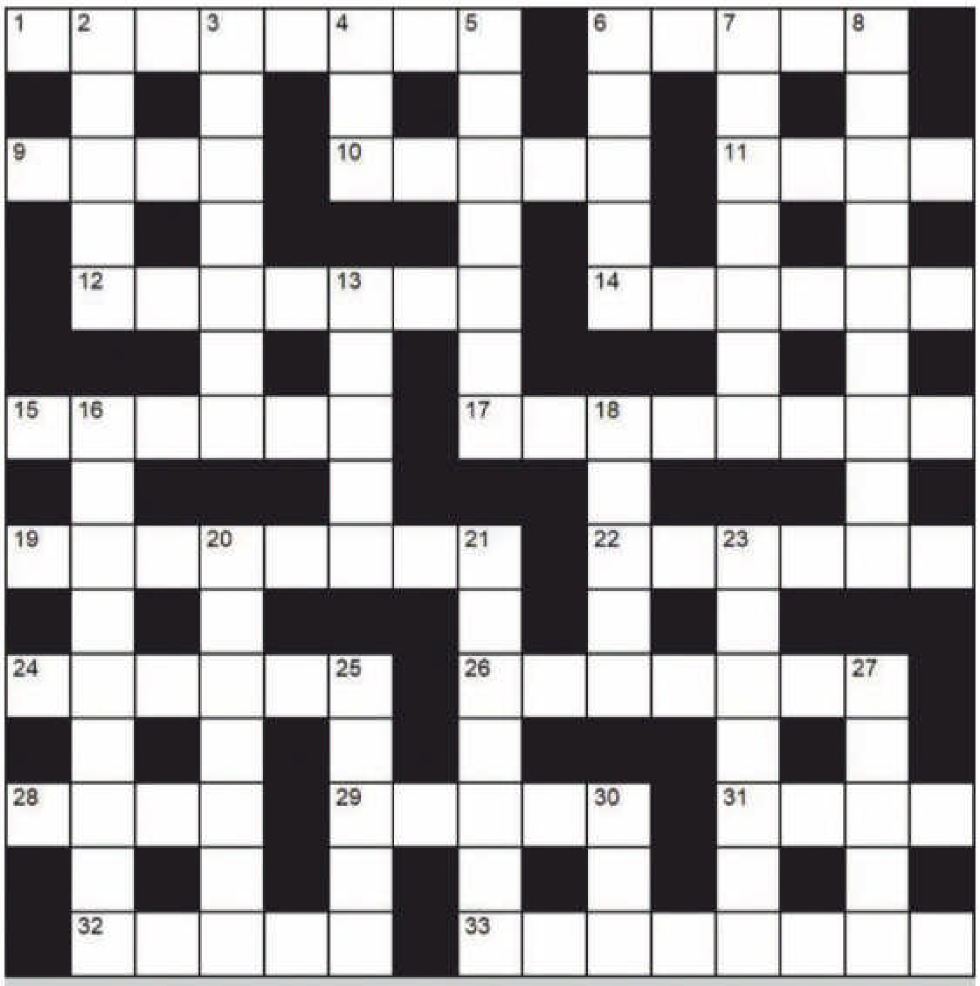
Crossword



ACROSS

1 Fragrant white-flowering shrub, commonly called Cape jasmine (8)
6 Genus of feather-grass… is apt to vary (5)
9 Series of dwarf buddlejas, and insect's appreciative sound (4)
10 Part of a flower's pistil – in honesty leaves (5)
11 Wingless, parasitic insect… damaged leaf (4)
12 Climbers called bluebell creepers gets Sally so excited (7)
14/3 down A spectacular *Cordyline australis* – 'English Riviera' stunner (6,7)
15 Fly ___: red-capped mushroom with white spots (6)
17 Trees/shrubs with goblet or star-shaped flowers in spring (8)
19 Alpines with trumpet-shaped, blue flowers (8)
22 Tropical forest climbing plants a snail damaged (6)
24 Genus of kumquats (6)
26 A white-flowering *Erica carnea*'s… label is wrong (7)
28 Gardening author, __ Pavord (4)
29 The elm genus (5)
31/33 Common name of butterfly magnet *Eupatorium cannabinum* (4,8)
32 Takes photos of shortened antirrhinums? (5)
33 See 31 across

DOWN

2 Lords-and-ladies plants – some appear, um, small (5)
3 See 14 across
4 In short, a charity supported by private gardens open days (3)
5 Rockery plant with yellow or white flowers (7)
6 Dear description of William and Basil and 5 down? (5)
7 Orange begonia that's fittingly a blaze of colour (7)
8 Genus of 'snakeroot' plant – sort of tare again (9)
13 ___ *filamentosa*, 'Adam's Needle', agave relative (5)
16 Genus of daisy-like annuals eg corn marigold – begin soil preparation (9)
18 Genus of plants with globular blue flowers – sort of gladioli, but not old! (5)
20 Term meaning cluster of three leaflets – as in *Choisya* ____ (7)
21 Genus of white-flowering, holly-like plant, with bright-red berries on female plant (7)
23 The genus of dill hidden by Janet humorously (7)
25 Garden pests fatally attracted to beer? (5)
27 Fruit associated with balm and grass (5)
30 What horticulturist Harold Hillier was entitled to be called (3)

- **Solutions to this issue's crossword will be printed in the October issue**

SOLUTIONS TO THE AUGUST ISSUE'S CROSSWORD

Across 1 Cedar **4** Fatsia **9** Rust **10** Drupe **11** Myth **12** Chestnut **14** Album **15** Tomato **17** Rock rose **21** Mescal **23** Nyssa **25** Botanist **27** Whin **28** Gourd **30** Case **31** Snails **32/19** Crown Imperial.

Down 1 Couch **2** Datisca **3** Rod **5** Areca **6** Samobor **7** Artemisia **8** Butterfly blue **13** Naomi **16** Osmanthus **18** Comet **20** Elsanta **22** Senecio **24** Angel **26** Susan **29** Doc.

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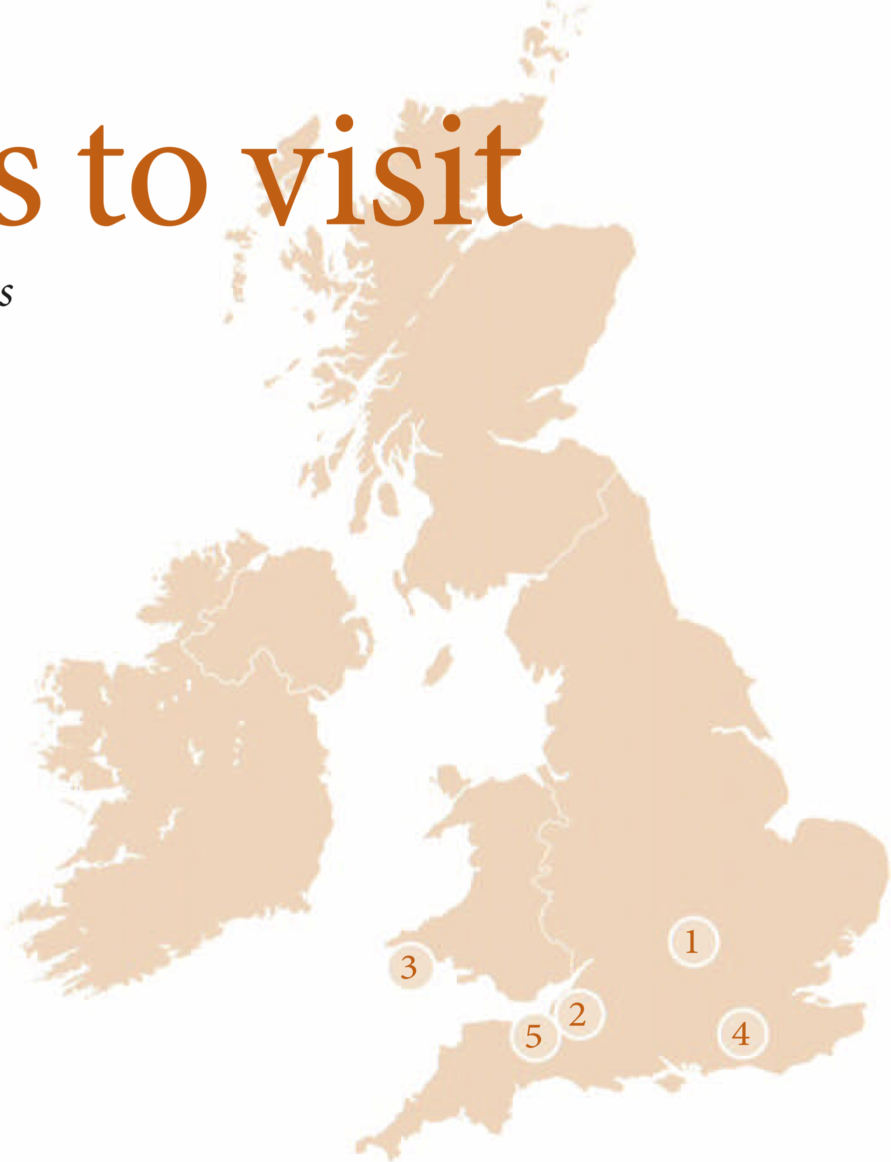

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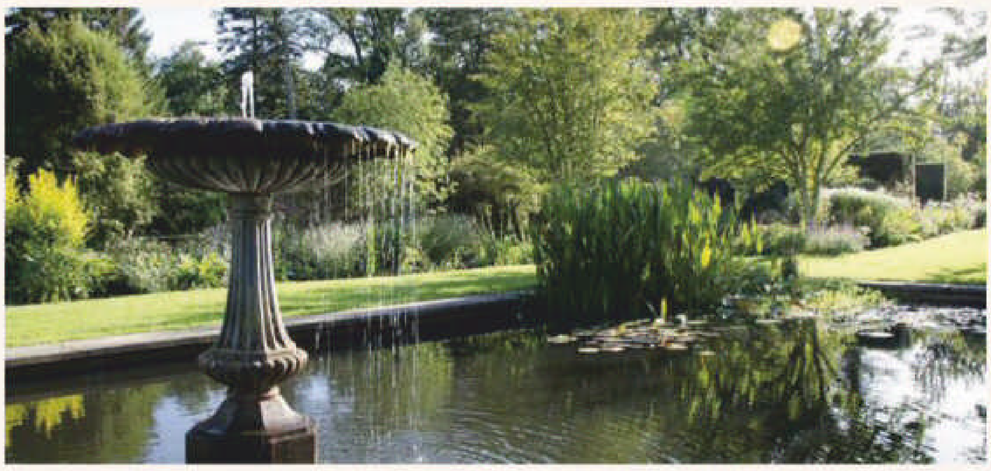

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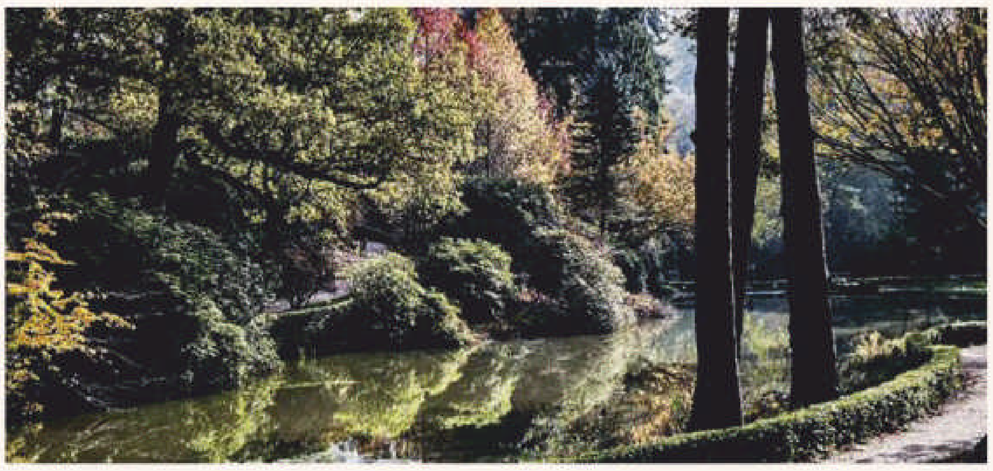

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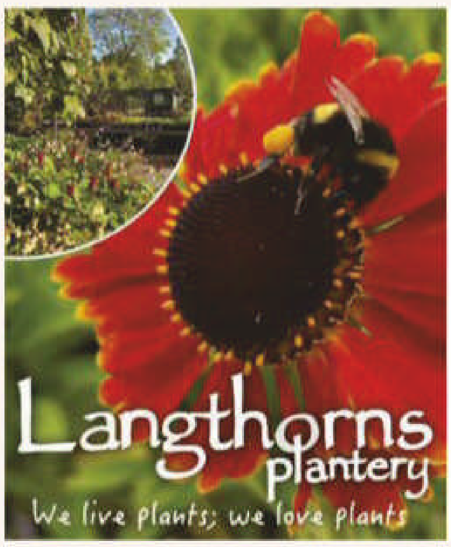

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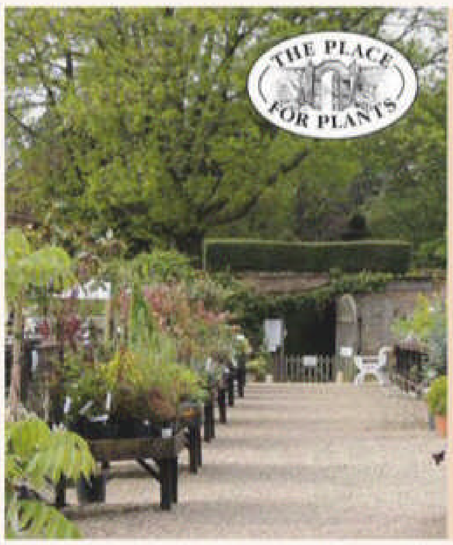

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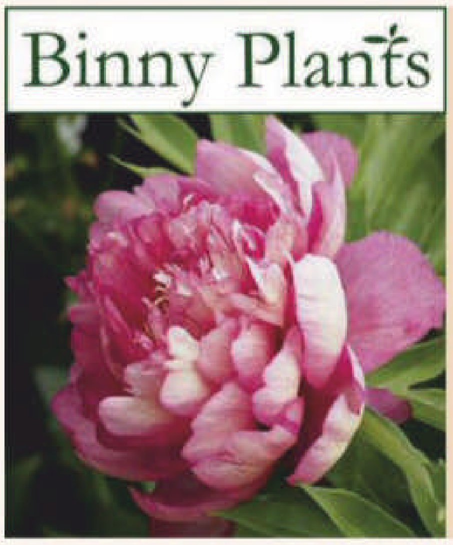

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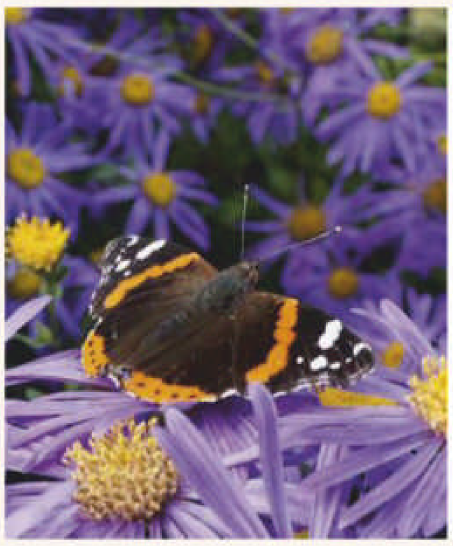

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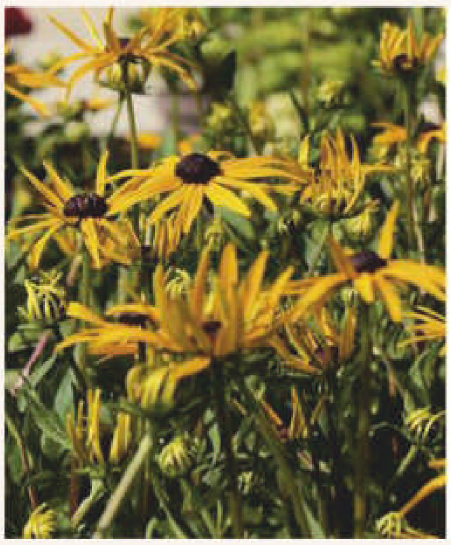

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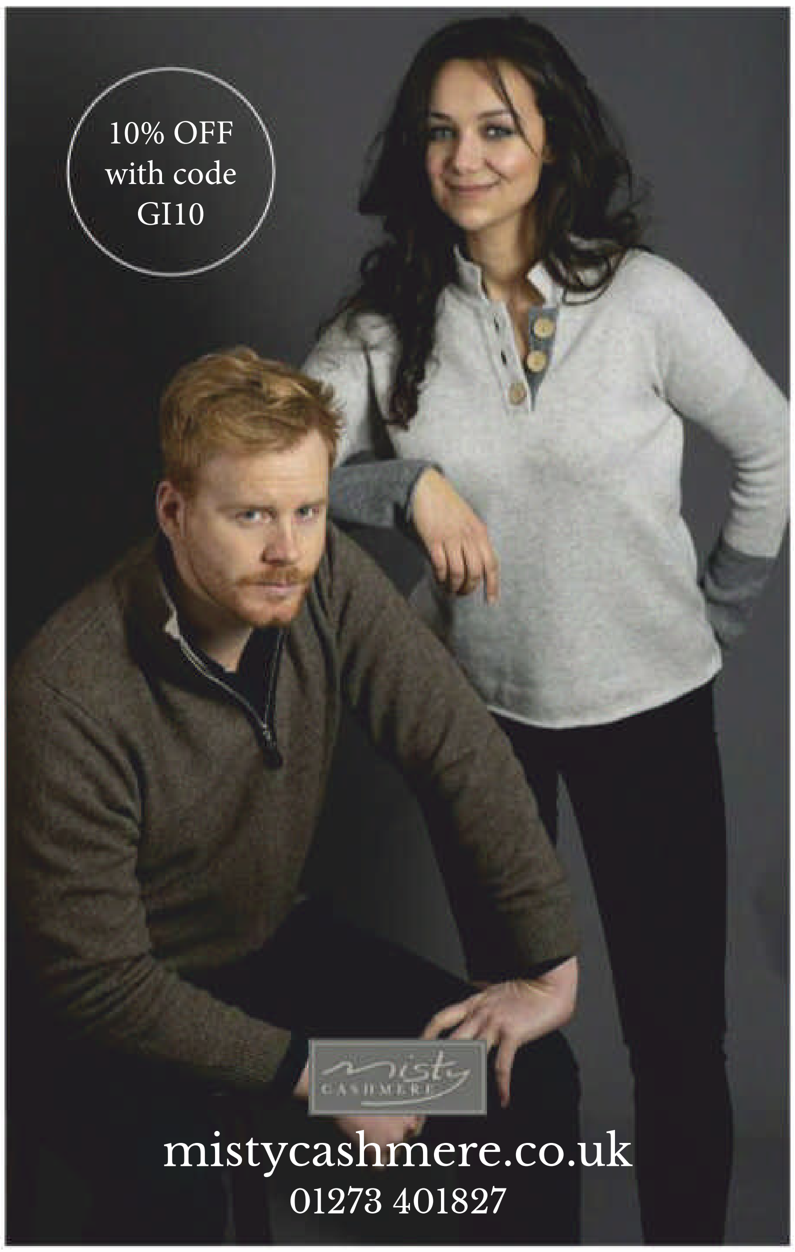

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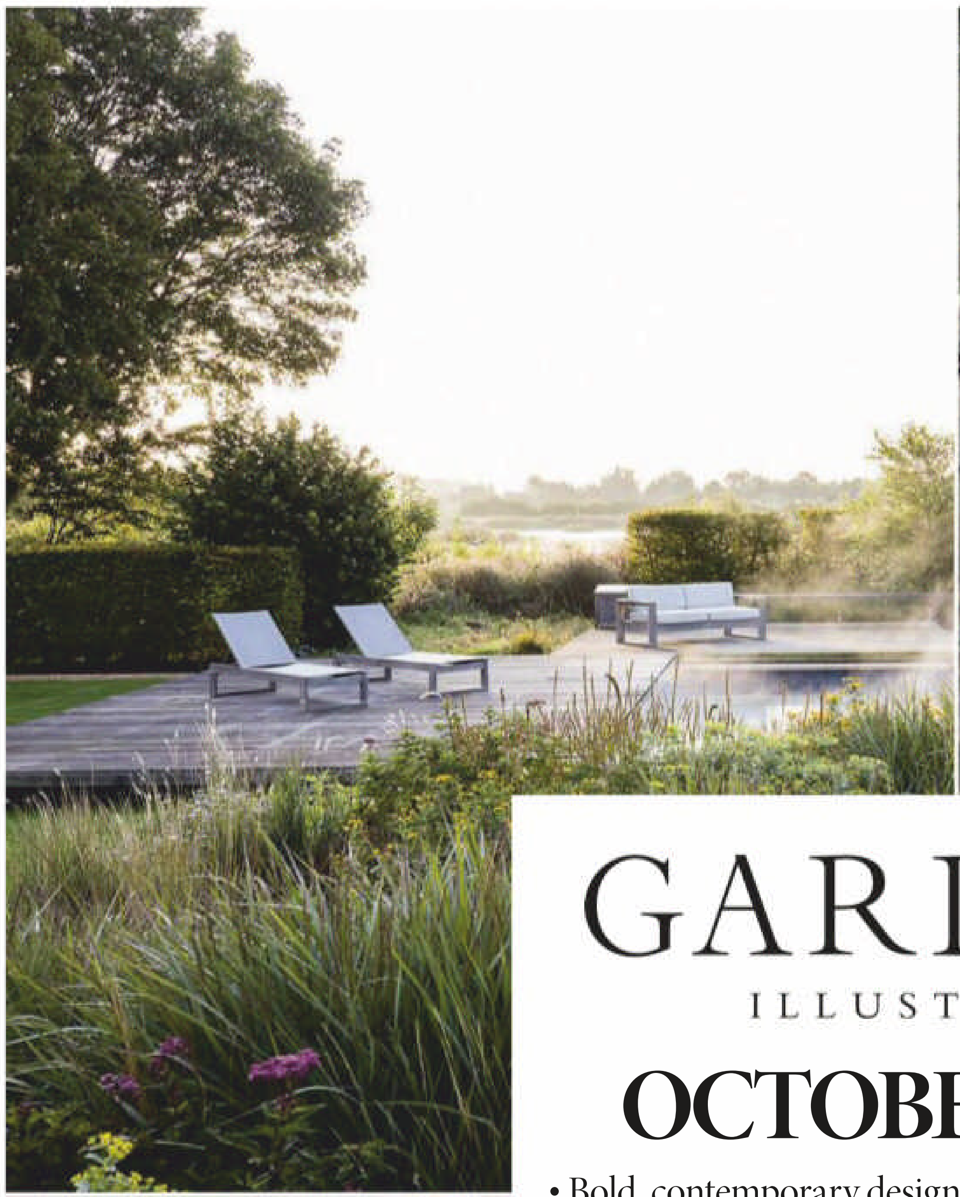

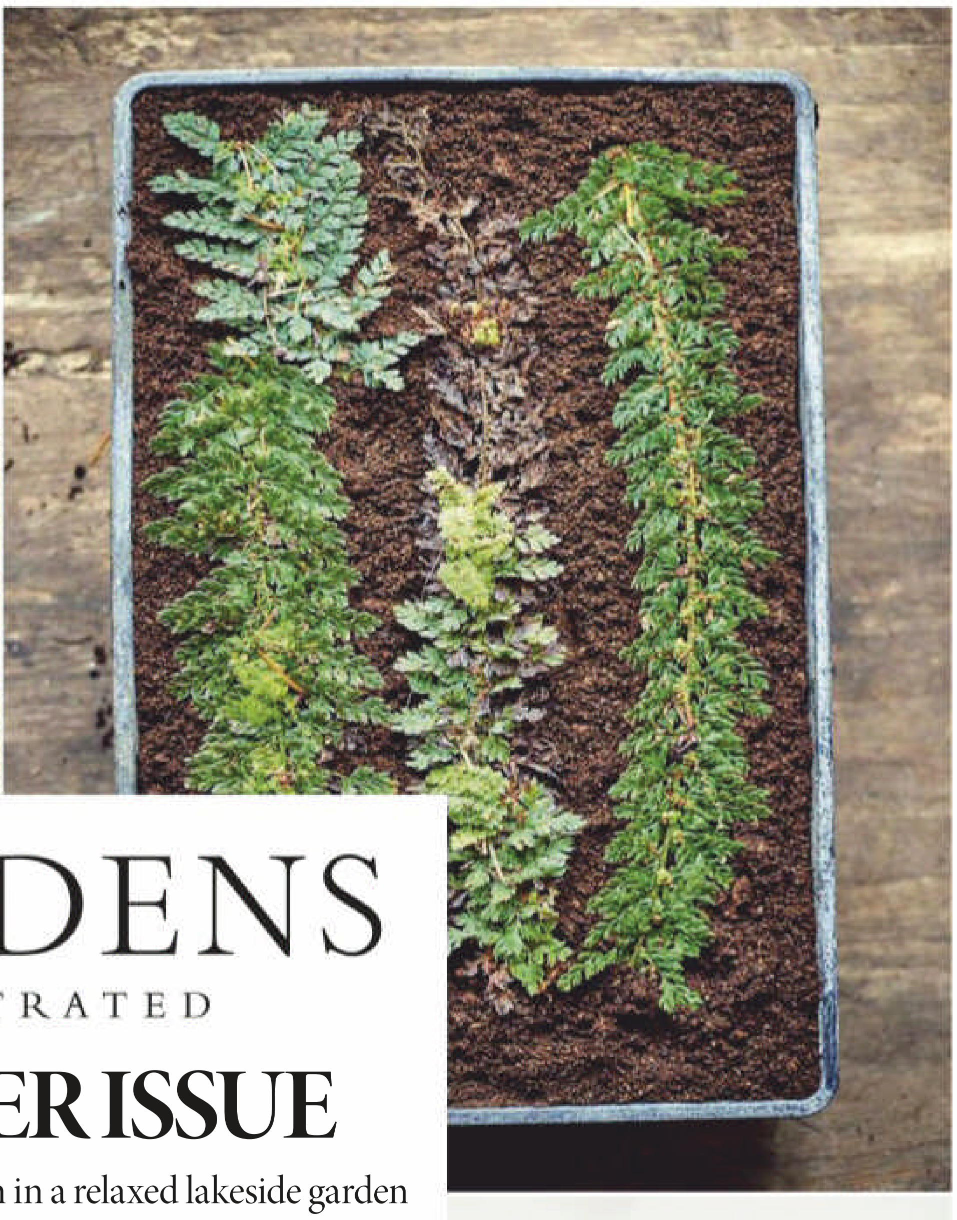

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OCTOBER ISSUE

- Bold, contemporary design in a relaxed lakeside garden
- How to propagate ferns
- Discover the beautiful cut flowers grown among the ruins of an Augustinian priory
- Find the most beautiful persicarias for autumn gardens
- The best bulbs to plant now for pollinators
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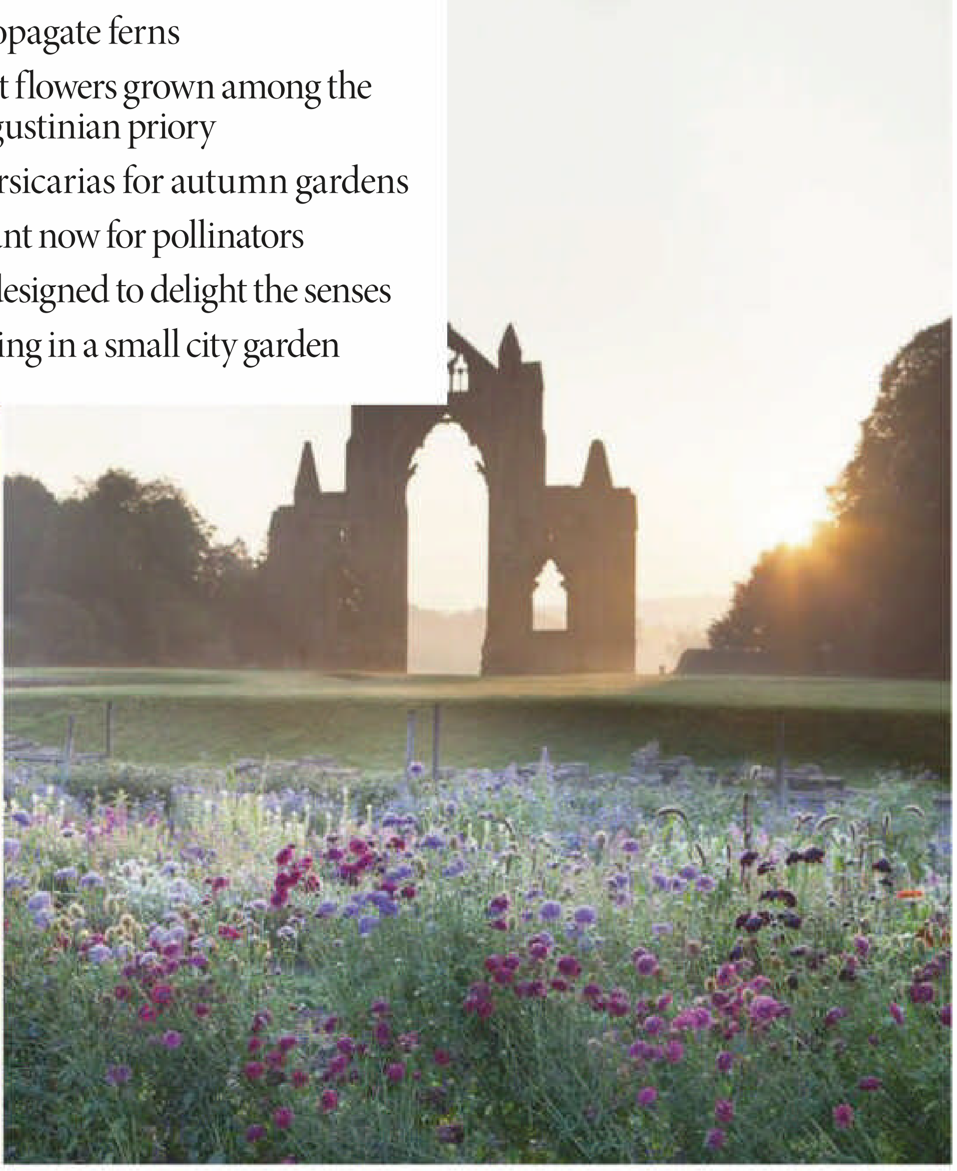

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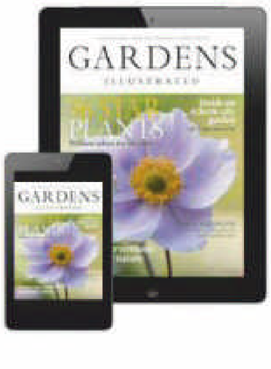

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HOUSEPLANTS

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WORDS **JANE PERRONE** ILLUSTRATION **PATRICK MORGAN**

All summer long, I can be seen enacting a madcap dance in my sun room: feather duster held aloft, trying to shoo a cloud of pollinators out through the French doors. I do love flying insects, from dainty parasitoid wasps to those furry dirigibles of the garden, the bumblebees, but I prefer them outside, not beating uselessly against the glass roof. If anyone can explain the transatlantic anomaly that means every North American home is fitted with fly screens as standard, while they are pretty much unheard of in the UK, I'd appreciate it.

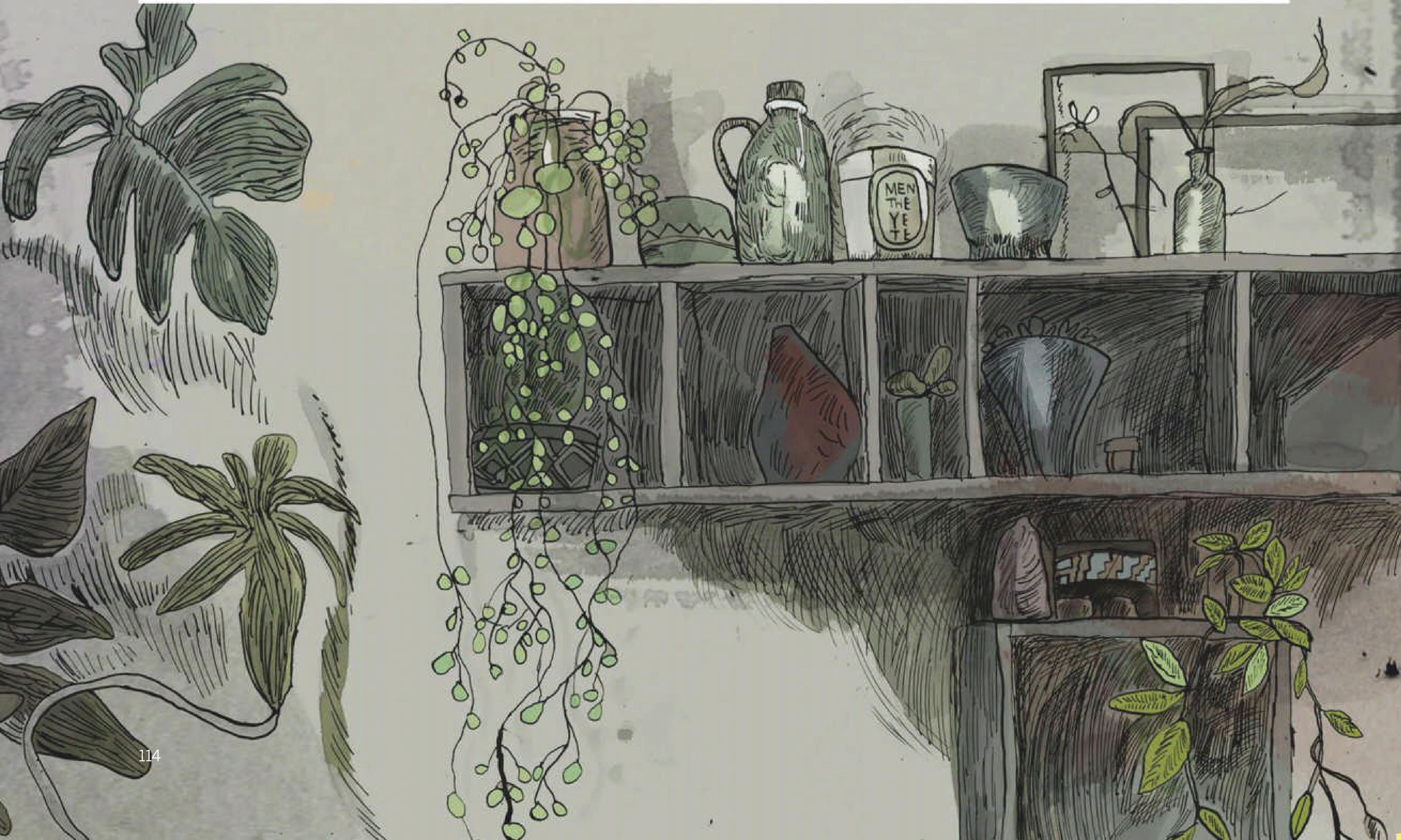
I take some small comfort in my discovery that some of the smaller flies that enter may end up taking an enforced break inside the flowers of the string of hearts (*Ceropegia linearis* subsp. *woodii*) that trails from a high shelf in the corner. 'String' is an accurate common name for this plant, whose thin wiry stems can easily reach a metre or two long, adorned with opposite pairs of fleshy, dark-green, heart-shaped leaves inscribed in silver. Small pinky-purple flowers appear along the stems every summer. These flowers – I can't help thinking of tiny turkey basters when I look at them – are tube-shaped, topped with a hairy cage structure. Botanists aren't exactly sure how the flies are tempted inside, although a prominent theory is what's known as 'brood site deception', which means that the flies are fooled into thinking it's their favourite spot to lay eggs, and end up trapped in the tube by hairs so aligned that they cannot escape the way they entered. This isn't carnivory, just tenacious pursuit of pollination: once the short-lived flower starts to fade, the flies will be released.

These feats of pollination go largely unnoticed, because it is the string of hearts' pretty foliage and ease of cultivation, not its flowers, that have made it such an enduringly popular houseplant. Like most of the other 200 or so species in the genus *Ceropegia*, string of hearts grows wild in southern Africa, where it scrambles around the semi-arid landscape and roots into the ground where it can. In our homes, its flexible stems can be allowed to trail to great lengths, or trained around a hoop or even a picture frame, but take care not to get them tangled: unknotting a mass of *Ceropegia* strings is a thankless task. A few cultivars are available: 'Lady Heart' offers leaves irregularly edged in cream, while 'Silver Glory' has heavily silvered foliage. Other species from the genus are harder to find but equally fun to grow, such as *C. sandersonii* with flowers that look like green parachutes, and *C. ampliata* with its strangely bare succulent stems and white and green blooms.

String of hearts is probably the most popular, though, because it is just so tolerant of a wide range of conditions. Its stems spring from a tuber that can reach the size (and the look) of a potato in older specimens: another common name, rosary vine, stems from the plant's habit of growing more of these tubers in miniature along its stems. It will thrive in shade and bright light (though it should avoid hours of direct sun), and draw on the reserves of its tubers to survive weeks without water. The only realistic way of killing this plant is potting it up in a drainage-free container in heavy compost and leaving the tubers to turn to mush. Provide a free-draining potting mix by adding a good handful of grit or perlite to your regular houseplant compost, and the plant can be watered weekly in the growing season. Ease off in the winter, only watering when the compost is really dry. Then, your only real problem is what to do when your string of hearts reaches the floor.

The quickest way to propagate plants is to check your plant for the potato-like aerial tubers that often stud the stems. Snip these away just above the tuber and plant them just under the surface of a pot of gritty compost, and they will root almost immediately. If you aren't graced with any tubers (some plants just don't seem to produce them), cut away some stems and place into a glass of water to root: it will take a little longer, but the result will be the same. If your plant looks a little sparse, you can even plant rooted stems or aerial tubers back into the original pot to make a more abundant display. ❏

Jane Perrone is a garden writer



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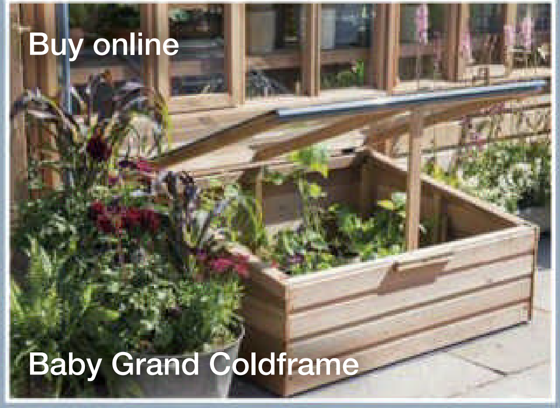

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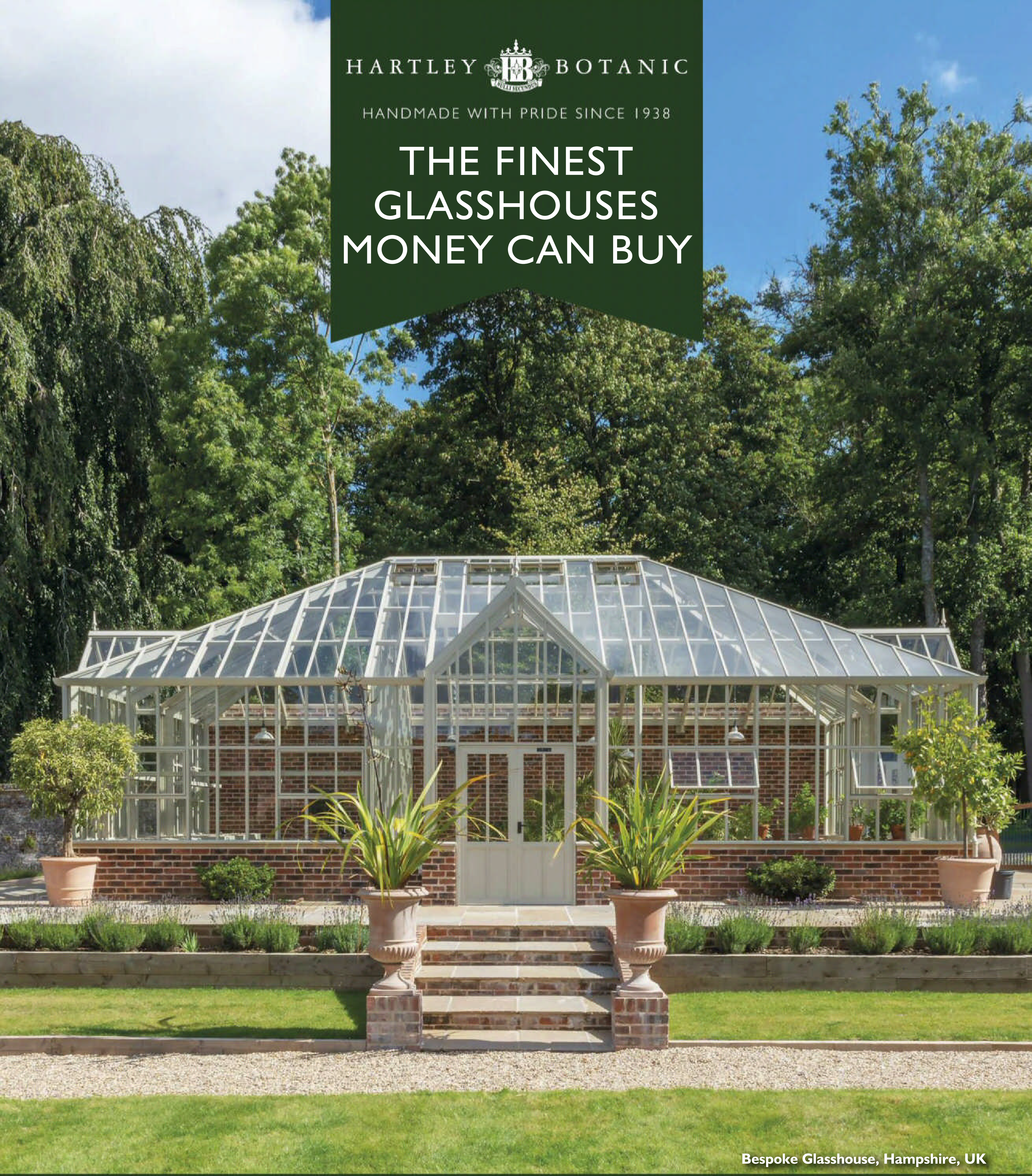

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